

BELL'S EDITION
The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE FROM
CHAUCER to CHURCHILL



CHAUCER VOL. III.
— on the grene he saw fluting a wif
A fouler wight ther may no man devise

The Wife of Bathes Tale. l. 600.

Nathaniel del.

Grignon sculp.

London Printed for John Bell British Library Decem^r 31st 1782.



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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From Urry's Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwhitt's Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----

Of ditees and of songes glade,

The which he---made,

The londe fulfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne----

Whom all this londe schulde of ryght preferre,

Sith of our langage he wasthe lode-sterre----

That made first to dysstyle and rayne

The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence

Into our tunge thugh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede----

My mayster CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,

Mirroure of fructuous entendement,

Univerfel fadir in science----

This londis verray tresour and richesse----

The firste synder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,

Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regelere,

In eloquence balme, condict and diall,

Mylky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,

Of fresche endite throw Albion iland braid.

DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,

As in oure tounge flour imperial

That raise in Brittane evir, quha reldis right

Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,

The fresche enamilt termes celestiaall:

This maier couth half illuminit full bright,

Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,

Surrounting every tounge terrestriall

As fir as Mavi's morrow dois midnight.

DUNBAR.

VOL. III.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
VOL. III.

CONTAINING HIS
CANTERBURY TALES, *viz.*

THE WIF OF BATHES TALE, THE FRERES TALE, THE SOMPNOURES TALE,		THE CLERKES TALE, THE MARCHANTES TALE, THE SQUIERES TALE, <i>&c. &c. &c.</i>
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But natheles certain
 I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
 But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
 On metres and on rhiming craftily)
 Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
 Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
 And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
 In a book, he hath sayd hem in another----
 Who so that wol his large Volume seke. TALES, *ver.* 4465.

Dan CHAUCER, well of English undecil'd,
 On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
 Old Dan Geoffrey, in whose gentle spright
 The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
 He whilst he lived was the soveraign head
 Of shepherds all-----

SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
 To us discovers day from far;
 His light these mists and clouds dissolv'd
 Which our dark nation long involv'd;
 But he descending to the shades
 Darknes again the age invades.

DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
 The language of our fathers--- His legends blithe
 He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
 Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
 The fashions and the follies of the world
 With cunning hand portraying-----
 Him who in times-----

Dark and untaught began with charming verse
 To tame the rudeness of his native land.

AKENSIDE.

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Anno 1782.



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THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE WIF OF BATHE'S PROLOGUE.

EXPERIENCE, though non auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage; 5585
For, Lordings, sin I twelf yere was of age
(Thanked be God that is eterne on live)
Husbondes at chirche dore have I had five,
(If I so often might han wedded be)
And all were worthy men in hir degree. 5590

¶. 5583.] I have already given my reasons for following the best mss. in placing this Prologue of The Wife of Bathe next to The Man of Lawes Tale, *Discourse*, &c. § 16. The want of a few verses to connect this Prologue with the preceding Tale was perceived long ago, and the defect was attempted to be supplied by the author of the following lines, which in ms. *B.* are prefixed to the common Prologue;

Oure Oost gan tho to loke up anon.
Gode men, quod he, herkeneth everichone,
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale
This Marchant hath itold a mery Tale,
Howe Januarie hadde a lither jape,
His wyf put in his hood an ape.
But hercof I wil leve off as now.
Dame Wyf of Bathe, quod he, I pray you
Telle us a Tale now nexte after this.
Sir Oost, quod she, so God my soule blis
As I fully thereto wil consente,
And also it is myn hole entente
To done yow alle disporte as that I cau.
But holde me excused; I am a woman:
I can not reherse as these clerkes kune.
And riyt anon she hath hir Tale bygunne.
Experience, &c.

The same lines are in mss. *Bod.* C. and Z. I print them here in order to justify myself for not inserting them in the text.

A iij

But me was told, not longe time agon is,
 That sithen Crist ne went never but onis
 To wedding in the Cane of Galilce,
 That by that ilke ensample taught he me
 That I ne shulde wedded be but ones. 5595
 Lo, herke eke, which a sharp word for the nones,
 Beside a welle Jesu God and man
 Spake in represe of the Samaritan;
 Thou hast yhadde five husbonds, sayde he,
 And thilke man that now hath wedded thee 5600
 Is not thyn husbond. Thus said he certain,
 What that he ment therby I can not fain;
 But that I aske why that the fifthe man
 Was non husbond to the Samaritan?
 How many might she have in mariage? 5605
 Yet herd I never tellen in min age
 Upon this noumbre diffinitoun;
 Men may devine and glosen up and down.

But wel I wot expresse withouten lie
 God had us for to wex and multiplie; 5610
 That gentil text can I wel understond:
 Eke wel I wot he sayd that min husbond
 Shuld leve fader and moder and take to me;
 But of no noumbre mention made he
 Of bigamic or of ologamic; 5615
 Why shuld men than speke of it vilanie?

Lo here the wise King, Dan Salomon,
 I trow he hadde wives mo than on,

(As wolde God it lesful were to me
 To be refreshed half so oft as he) 5620
 Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives?
 No man hath swiche that in this world on live is.
 God wot this noble king, as to my witte,
 The firste night had many a mery fitte
 With eche of hem, so wel was him on live. 5625
 Blessed be God that I have wedded five;
 Welcome the sixthe whan that ever he shall;
 For sith I wol not kepe me chaste in all,
 Whan min husbond is fro the world ygone.
 Som Cristen man shal wedden me anon; 5630
 For than the apostle faith that I am fre
 To wedde a' Goddes half wher it liketh me;
 He faith that to be wedded is no sinne;
 Better is to be wedded than to brinne.
 What rekketh me though folk say vilanie 5635
 Of shrewed Lamech and his bigamie?

v. 5626. *I have wedded five*] After this verse the fix follow-
 ing are in miss. C. 1, H.A. C. 2, and in edit. Ca. 2;

- Of whiche I have pyked out the beste
 Bothe of here nether purs and of here chesse.
 Diverse scoles maken parfyte clerkes,
 And diverse pracllyk in many sondry werkes
 Maken the werkman parfyte sekirly:
 Of five husbondes scoleryng am I;
 Welcome the sixthe, &c.

If these lines are not Chaucer's they are certainly more in his
 manner than the generality of the imitations of him. Perhaps
 he wrote them, and afterwards blotted them out. They come
 in but awkwardly here, and he has used the principal idea in
 another place, *March. T. ver. 9301*.

I wot wel Abraham was an holy man,
 And Jacob eke, as fer as ever I can,
 And eche of hem had wives mo than two,
 And many another holy man also. 5640

Wher can ye seen in any maner age
 That highe God defended mariage
 By expresse word? I pray you telleth me,
 Or wher commanded he virginitee?

I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede, 5645
 The apostle, whan he spake of maidenhede,
 He said that precept therof had he non;
 Men may conseille a woman to ben on,
 But conseilling is no commandement;
 He put it in our owen jugement. 5650

For hadde God commanded maidenhede,
 Than had he dampned wedding out of drede;
 And certes if ther were no sede yfowe
 Virginitee than wherof shuld it growe?

Poule dorste not commanden at the lest 5655
 A thing of which his maister yaf non hest.

The dart is sette up for virginitee,
 Catch who so may, who renneth best let see,
 But this word is not take of every wight,
 But ther as God wol yeve it of his might. 5660

I wot wel that the apostle was a maid,
 But natheles, though that he wrote and said
 He wold that every wight were swiche as he,
 All n'is but conseil to virginitee.

And for to ben a wif he yaf me leve, 5665
 Of indulgence, so n'is it non-repreve
 To wedden me, if that my make die,
 Withoute exception of bigamie;
 All were it good no woman for to touche,
 (He ment as in his bed or in his couche) 5670
 For peril is both fire and tow to assemble;
 Ye know what this ensample may resemble.

This is all and som, he held virginitee
 More parfit than wedding in freelte: 5675
 (Freelte clepe I, but if that he and she
 Wold lede hir lives all in chastitee)
 I graunt it wel, I have of non envie
 Who maidenhed preferre to bigamie;
 It liketh hem to be clene in body and gost:
 Of min estat I wol not maken boft. 5680

For wel ye know a lord in his houshold
 Ne hath nat every vessell all of gold:
 Som ben of tree, and don hir lord service.
 God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise,

✧. 5677. *I graunt it wel, I have non envie*—*Though maiden-
 bed preferre bigamie*] So these two verses stand, without any
 material difference, in all the mss. If they are right we must
 understand *preferre* to signify the same as *be preferred to*.
 Knowing no example of such a construction I have ventured
 at an alteration of the text. It might have been as well, per-
 haps, to have left the first line untouched, and to have cor-
 rected the second only thus;

Though maidenhed be preferr'd to bigamie.

✧. 5681. *a lord in his houshold*] See 2 Tim. ii. 20.

And everich hath of God a propre gift, 5685
 Som this, som that, as that him liketh shift.
 Virginitie is gret perfection,
 And continence eke with devotion;
 But Crist, that of perfection is welles,
 Ne bade not every wight he shuld go selle 5690
 All that he had and yeve it to the poure,
 And in swiche wise follow him and his lore:
 He spake to hem that wold live parfitly,
 And, Lordings, (by your leve) that am nat I:
 I wol bestow the flour of all myn age 5695
 In th' actes and the fruit of mariage.

Tell me also to what conclusion
 Were membres made of generation,
 And of so parfit wise a wight ywrought? 5699
 Trusteth me wel they were nat made for nought,
 Glose who so wol, and say bothe up and down,
 That they were made for purgatioun
 Of urine, and of other thinges smale,
 And eke to know a female from a male:
 And for non other cause? say ye no? 5705
 The experience wot wel it is not so.
 So that the clerkes be not with me wroth
 I say this, that they makeden ben for both,
 This is to sayn, for office and for ese
 Of engendrure, ther we not God displese. 5710
 Why shuld men elles in hir bookes sette
 That man shal yelden to his wif hire dette?

Now wherwith shuld he make his payement
If he ne used his sely instrument ?

Than were they made upon a creature 5715
To purge urine, and eke for engendrure.

But I say not that every wight is hold,
That hath swiche harneis as I to you told,
To gon and usen hem in engendrure;
Than shuld men take of chastitee no cure. 5720

Crist was a maide, and shapen as a man,
And many a feint, sith that this world began,
Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee ?
I n'll envie with no virginitee.

Let hem with bred of pured whete be fed, 5725
And let us wives eten barly bred :

And yet with barly bred, Mark tellen can,
Our Lord Jesu refreshed many a man.

In swiche estat as God hath cleped us
I wol persever, I n'am not precious. 5730

In wifhode wol I use min instrument
As frely as my Maker hath it sent.

If I be dangerous God yeve me sorwe,
Min husbond shal it have both even and morwe,
Whan that him list come forth and pay his dette. 5735

An husbond wol I have, I wol not lette,
Which shal be both my dettour and my thrall,
And have his tribulation withall

Upon his flesh, while that I am his wif.
I have the power during all my lif= 5740

Upon his propre body and nat he;
 Right thus the apostle told it unto me,
 And bad our husbands for to love us wel:
 All this sentence me liketh every del.

Up flet the Pardoner, and that anon; 5745
 Now, Dame, quod he, by God and by Seint John
 Ye ben a noble prechour in this cas:
 I was about to wed a wif, alas!
 What? shuld I bie it on my flesh so dere?
 Yet had I lever wed no wif to-yere. 5750

Abide, quod she, my Tale is not begonne;
 Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne,
 Er that I go, shal favor worse than ale:
 And whan that I have told thee forth my Tale
 Of tribulation in mariage, 5755
 Of which I am expert in all min age,
 (This is to sayn myself hath ben the whippe)
 Than maiest thou chesen wheder thou wolt sippe
 Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche:
 Beware of it er thou to neigh approche, 5760
 For I shal tell ensamples mo than ten.
 Who so that n'ill beware by other men
 By him shal other men corrected be:
 Thise same wordes writeth Ptholomee,

¶ 5764. *writeth Ptholomee*] In the margin of ms. C. 1 is the following quotation; "Qui per alios non corrigitur, alii per ipsum corrigitur:" but I cannot find any such passage in The Almageste. I suspect that The Wife of Bathes copy of Ptolemy was very different from any that I have been able to meet with. See another quotation from him, ver. 7906.

Rede in his Almajeste, and take it there. 5765

Dame, I wold pray you, if your will it were,
Sayde this Pardoner, as ye began
Tell forth your Tale, and spareth for no man,
And techeth us yonge men of your practike.

Gladly, quod she, sin that it may you like. 5770
But that I pray to all this compaignie,
If that I speke after my fantasie,
As taketh not a greefe of that I say,
For min entente is not but for to play.

Now, Sires, than wol I tell you forth my Tale. 5775

As ever mote I drincken win or ale
I shal say soth, the husbondes that I had
As three of hem were good and two were bad.
The three were goode men and riche and olde;
Unnethes mighten they the statute holde 5780
In which that they were bounden unto me;
Ye wot wel what I mene of this parde.

As God me helpe I laugh whan that I thinke
How pitoussly a-night I made hem swinke,
But by my say I tolde of it no store: 5785

They had me yeven hir lond and hir trefore;
Me neded not do lenger diligence
To win hir love or don hem reverence.

They loved me so wel by God above
That I ne tolde no deintee of hir love. 5790

A wise woman wol besie hire ever in on
To geten hir love ther as she hath non.

But sith I had hem holly in min hond,
 And that they hadde yeven me all hir lond,
 What shuld I taken kepe hem for to plese, 5795
 But it were for my profit or min ese?
 I set hem so a-werke by my fay,
 That many a night they songen Wala wa!
 The bacon was not set for hem I trow
 That som men have in Essex at Donmow. 5800
 I governed hem so wel after my lawe
 That eche of hem ful blisful was and sawe
 To bringen me gay thinges fro the feyre:
 They were ful glade whan I spake hem fayre;
 For God it wot I chidde hem spitoufly. 5805
 Now herkeneth how I bare me proprely.
 Ye wise wives, that can understond,
 Thus shul ye speke, and bere hem wrong on hond,
 For half so boldely can ther no man
 Sweren and lien as a woman can. 5810
 (I say not this by wives that ben wise,
 But if it be whan they hem misavise.)

v. 5799. *The bacon---at Donmow*] See Blount's *Ant. Te-
 sures*, p. 162. This whimsical institution was not peculiar to
 Dunmow; there was the same in Bretagne; "A l'Abbaie Saint
 "Melaine, près Rennes, y a, plus de six cens ans font, un costé
 "de lard encore tout frais et non corrompu; et neantmoins
 "voué et ordonné aux premiers, qui par an et jour ensemble
 "mariez ont vescu sans debat, grondement, et sans s'en re-
 "pentir." *Contes d'Eutrap*, t. ii. p. 161.

v. 5810. *Sweren and lien*] *Rom. de la R. ver.* 19013;

Car plus hardiment que nulz homes
 Certainement jurent et mentent.

v. 5811. *(I say not this)*] This parenthesis seems to be rather
 belonging to Chaucer himself than to The Wife of Bath.

A wise wif, if that she can hire good,
 Shal beren hem on hond the cow is wood,
 And taken witnesse of hire owen mayd 5815
 Of hir assent; but herkeneth how I sayd.

Sire olde Kaynard, is this thin aray?
 Why is my neigheboures wif so gay?
 She is honoured over al wher she goth,
 I sit at home, I have no thrifty cloth. 5820

What dost thou at my neigheboures hous?
 Is she so faire? art thou so amorous?
 What, rownest thou with our maide? *benedicite!*
 Sire olde Lechour, let thy japes be.

And if I have a gossib or a frend, 5825
 (Withouten gilt) thou chidest as a fend
 If that I walke or play unto his hous.

Thou comest home as drenken as a mous,

v. 5814. *Shal beren hem on bond*] Shall make them believe falsely the cow is wood. The latter words may either signify that the cow is mad or made of wood: which of the two is the preferable interpretation it will be safest not to determine till we can discover the old story to which this phrase seems to be a proverbial allusion.

v. 5817. *Sire olde Kaynard*] *Cagnard* or *caignard* was a French term of reproach which seems to have been originally derived from *canis*, *Ménage*, in v. In the following speech it would be endless to produce all Chaucer's imitations; the beginning is from the fragment of Theophrastus quoted by St. Jerome, c. *Jovin*. l. i, and by John of Salisbury, *Polyerat*. l. viii. c. xi. See also *Rom. de la R.* ver. 8967. *et suiv.*

And precheſt on thy benche with evil preſe :
 'Thou ſayſt to me, It is a gret meſchiefe 5830
 'To wed a poure woman for coſtage;
 And if that ſhe be riche of high parage,
 Than ſayſt thou that it is a tourmentrie
 'To ſoffre hire pride and hire melancolie :
 And if that ſhe be faire, thou veray knave, 5835
 'Thou ſayſt that every holour wol hire have;
 She may no while in chaſtitee abide
 That is aſſailed upon every ſide.
 Thou ſayſt ſom folk deſire us for richeſſe,
 Som for our ſhape, and ſom for our fairneſſe, 5840
 And ſom for ſhe can eyther ſing or dance,
 And ſom for gentilleſſe and daliance,
 Som for hire hondes and hire armes ſmale :
 Thus goth all to the devil by thy tale.
 'Thou ſayſt men may not kepe a caſtel wal, 5845
 It may ſo long aſſailed be over al.
 And if that ſhe be ſoul, thou ſayſt that ſhe
 Coveteth every man that ſhe may ſee;
 For as a ſpaniel ſhe wol on him lepe
 'Til ſhe may finden ſom man hire to chepe. 5850
 Ne non ſo grey goos goth ther in the lake
 (As ſayſt thou) that wol ben withoute a make :
 And ſayſt it is an hard thing for to welde
 A thing that no man wol his thankes helde.
 Thus ſayſt thou, lorel, whan thou goſt to bed, 5855
 And that no wiſe man nedeth for to wed,

Ne no man that entendeth unto heven.
 With wilde thonder dint and fry leven
 Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke.

Thou sayst that dropping houses and eke smoke,
 And chiding wives, maken men to flee 5861
 Out of hir owen hous. A, *benedicite!*

What aileth swiche an old man for to chide?
 Thou sayst we wives wol our vices hide
 Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe. 5865
 Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe.

Thou sayst that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
 They ben assaied at diverse stoundes,
 Basines, lavoures, or that men hem bie,
 Spones, stooles, and all swiche husbondrie, 5870
 And so ben pottes, clothes, and aray,
 But folk of wives maken non assay
 Til they ben wedded, olde dotard shrewe,
 And than, sayst thou, we wol our vices shewe.

Thou sayst also that it displeth me 5875
 But if that thou wolt preisen my beautee,
 And but thou pore alway upon my face,
 And clepe me Faire Dame in every place;
 And but thou make a feste on thilke day
 That I was borne, and make me fresh and gay; 5880
 And but thou do to my norice honour,
 And to my chamberere within my bour,

v. 5882. *chamberere*] A chambermaid, Fr. See 8695, 8853;
 Son varlet et sa *chamberiere*,
 Aussi sa seur et sa nourrice
 Et sa mere, si mault n'est nise.

Rom. de la R. 14480.

B iij

And to my faders folk and myn allies :

Thus sayst thou, olde barel ful of lies.

And yet also of our prentis Jankin, 5885

For his crispe here, shining as gold so fin,

And for he squiereth me both up and doun,

Yet hast thou caught a false suspicion :

I wol him nat though thou were ded to-morwe.

But tell me this, Why hidest thou with forwe 590

The keies of thy cheft away fro me ?

It is my good as wel as thin parde.

What, weneft thou make an idiot of our Dame ?

Now by that Lord that cleped is Seint Jame

Thou shalt nat bothe, though that thou were wood,

Be maister of my body and of my good ; 5896

That on thou shalt forgo maugre thin eyen.

What helpeth it of me to enquere and spien ?

I trow thou woldest locke me in thy cheste.

Thou shuldest say, Fayr wif, go wher thee leste ; 5900

Take your disport ; I wol nat leve no tales ;

I know you for a trewe wif, Dame Ales.

We love no man that raketh kepe or charge

Wher that we gon ; we wol be at our large.

Of alle men yblessed mote he be 5905

The wif astrologien Dan Ptholomee,

That sayth this proverbe in his Almageste,

Of alle men his wisdom is higheste

That rekketh not who hath the world in hond.

By this proverbe thou shalt wel understond, 5910

Have thou ynough, what thar thee rekke or care
How merily that other folkes fare?

For certes, olde dotard, by your leve,
Ye shullen have queint right ynough at eve.

He is to gret a nigard that wol werne 5915

A man to light a candel at his lanterne;

He shal have never the lesse light parde:

Have thou ynough thee thar not plainen thee.

Thou sayst also if that we make us gay -

With clothing and with precious array 5920

That it is peril of our chastitee:

And yet with sorwe thou enforcest thee,

And sayst thise wordes in the apostles name;

In habit made with chastitee and shame

Ye women shul appareile you, (quod he) 5925

And nat in tressed here and gay perrie,

As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche.

After thy text ne after thy rubriche

I wol not work as mochel as a gnat.

Thou sayst also I walke out like a cat; 5930

For who so wolde fenge the cattes skin

Than wol the cat wel dwellen in hire in;

And if the cattes skin be fleke and gay

She wol nat dwellen in hous half a day,

But forth she wol, or any day be dawed, 5935

To shew hire skin and gon a caterwawed.

¶ 5923. in the apostles name] See 1 Tim. ii. 9.

This is to say, if I be gay, fire shrewe,
 I wol renne out my borel for to shewe.
 Sire olde fool, what helpeth thee to spien?
 Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyen 5940
 To be my wardecorps, as he can best,
 In faith he shal not kepe me but me lest:
 Yet coude I make his berd, so mote I the.

Thou sayest eke that ther ben things three,
 Which things gretly troublen all this erthe, 5945
 And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe:
 O lese fire shrewe, Jesu short thy lif.

Yet prechest thou, and sayst, An hateful wif
 Yreckened is for on of thise meschances.
 Be ther non other maner resemblances 5950
 That ye may liken your parables to
 But if a fely wif be on of tho?

Thou likenest eke womans love to helle,
 To barrein lond ther water may not dwelle.

Thou likenest it also to wilde fire; 5955
 The more it brenneth the more it hath desire
 To consume every thing that brent wol be.

Thou sayest right as wormes shende a tre
 Right so a wif destroieth hire husbond;
 This knowen they that ben to wives bond. 5960
 Lordings, right thus, as ye han understond,
 Bare I flisy min old husbondes on hond,
 That thus they saiden in hir dropkennesse;
 And all was faise but as I toke witnesse

On Jankin, and upon my nece also. 5965
 O Lord! the peine I did hem and the wo,
 Ful gilteles, by Goddes swete pine,
 For as an hors I coude bite and whine;
 I coude plain, and I was in the gilt,
 Or elles oftentime I had ben spilt. 5970
 Who so first cometh to the mill first grint;
 I plained first, so was our werre ystint.
 They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blive
 Of thing the which they never agilt hir live.
 Of wenches wold I beren hem on hond 5975
 Whan that for sike unnethes might they stond,
 Yet tikeled I his herte for that he
 Wend that I had of him so gret chiertee:
 I swore that all my walking out by night
 Was for to espien wenches that he dight: 5980
 Under that colour had I many a mirth;
 For all swiche wit is yeven us in our birth;
 Deccite, weping, spinning, God hath yeven
 To women kindly while that they may liven.
 And thus of o thing I may avaunten me, 5985
 At th' ende I had the beter in eche degree
 By sleight or force, or by som maner thing,
 As by continual murmur or grutching,
 Namely a-bed; ther hadden they meschance;
 Ther wold I chide, and don hem no plesance: 5990
 I wold no lenger in the bed abide
 If that I felt his arme over my side,

Til he had made his raunson unto me,
Than wold I soffre him do his nicetec :
And therfore every man this Tale I tell, 5995
Winne who so may, for all is for to sell.
With empty hond men may no haukes lure;
For winning wold I all his lust endure,
And maken me a feined appetit,
And yet in bacon had I never delit, 6000
That maked me that ever I wold hem chide;
For though the Pope had sitten hem beside
I wold not spare hem at hir owen bord,
For by my trouthe I quitte hem word for word.
As helpe me veray God omnipotent, 6005
Tho I right now shuld make my testament,
I ne owe hem not a word that it n'is quit;
I brought it so abouten by my wit
That they must yeve it up as for the best,
Or elles had we never ben in rest; 6010
For though he loked as a wood leon
Yet shuld he faille of his conclusion.
Than wold I say, Now, goode lese, take kepe;
How mekely loketh Wilkin oure shepe!
Come ner my spoufe, and let me ba thy cheke; 6015
Ye shulden be al patient and meke,
And han a swete spiced conscience,
Sith ye so preche of Jobes patience.
Suffreth alway sin ye so wel can preche,
And but ye do, certain we shal you teche 6020

That it is faire to han a wif in pees.
 On of us two most bowen doutelees;
 And sith a man is more resonable
 Than woman is ye mosten ben suffrable.
 What aileth you to grutchen thus and grone? 6025
 Is it for ye wold have my queint alone?
 Why take it all; lo, have it every del:
 Peter, I shrew you but ye love it wel:
 For if I wolde sell my *belle chose*
 I coude walke as freshe as is a rose, 6030
 But I wol kepe it for your owen toth.
 Ye be to blame, by God I say you soth.

Swiche maner wordes hadden we on hond.
 Now wol I speken of my of fourthe hufbond.

My fourthe hufbonde was a revellour, 6035
 This is to sayn, he had a paramour,
 And I was yonge and ful of ragerie,
 Stibborne and strong, and joly as a pie;
 Tho coude I dancen to an harpe smale,
 And sing ywis as any nightingale, 6040
 Whan I had dronke a draught of swete wine.
 Metellius, the foule cherle, the swine,
 That with a staf beraft his wif hire lif
 For she drank wine, though I had ben his wif
 Ne shuld he not have daunted me fro drinke; 6045
 And after wine of Venus most I thinke;

v. 6042. *Metellius*] This story is told by Fliny, *Nat. Hist.*
 l. xiv. c. 13, of one Mecenius; but Chaucer probably followed
 Valerius Maximus, l. vi. c. 3.

For al so fiker as cold engendreth hayl
 A likerous mouth most han a likerous tayl.
 In woman vinolent is no defence,
 This knowen lechours by experience. 6050

But, Lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
 Upon my youth, and on my jolitee,
 It tikeleth me about myn herte rote:
 Unto this day it doth myn herte bote,
 That I have had my world as in my time. 6055
 But age, alas! that all wol envenime,
 Hath me beraft my beautee and my pith;
 Let go, farewell, the devil go therwith!
 The flour is gon, ther n'is no more to tell;
 The bren as I best may now moste I sell. 6060
 But yet to be right mery wol I fond.
 Now forth to tellen of my fourthe husband.

I say I had in herte gret despit
 That he of any other had delit:
 But he was quit by God and by Seint Joce: 6065
 I made him of the same wood a croce,
 Not of my body in no foule manere,
 But certainly I made folk swiche chere
 That in his owen grese I made him frie
 For anger and for veray jalousie. 6070
 By God, in erth I was his Purgatorie,
 For which I hope his soule be in glorie:

¶ 6049. *In woman vinolent*] *Rom. de la R. 14222*;

Car puiſque femme eſt enyverce

El n'a point en ſoy de deſſence.—

¶ 6065. *Seint Joce*] Or *Joſſe*. Sanctus Judocus was a ſaint of
 Ponthieu, *Vocab. Hagiol.* prefixed to *Menage*, *Etymol. Fr.*

For, God it wote, he fate ful oft and songe
 Whan that his sho ful bitterly him wronge;
 Ther was no wight, save God and he, that wiste
 In many a wise how sore that I him twiste. 6076
 He died whan I came fro Jerusalem,
 And lith ygrave under the rode-beem;
 All is his tombe not so curious
 As was the sepulcre of him Darius, 6080
 Which that Appelles wrought so sotelly:
 It is but wast to bury hem preciously.
 Let him farewel, God give his soule rest,
 He is now in his grave and in his chest.
 Now of my fifthe husbonde wol I telle: 6085
 God let his soule never come in helle:
 And yet was he to me the moste shrew;
 That fele I on my ribbes all by rew,
 And ever shal unto min ending day:
 But in our bed he was so fresh and gay, 6090
 And therwithall he coude so wel me glose,
 Whan that he wolde han my *belle chose*,
 That though he had me bet on every bon
 He coude win agen my love anon.
 I trow I loved him the bet, for he 6095
 Was of his love so dangerous to me.
 We winnemen han, if that I shal not lie,
 In this matere a queinte fantasie.
 Waite, what thing we may nat lightly have
 Therafter wol we cry all day and crave. 6100

Forbede us thing and that desiren we;
 Prese on us fast and thanne wol we flee.
 With danger uttren we all our chaffare;
 Gret prees at market maketh dere ware,
 And to gret chepe is holden at litel prife;
 This knoweth every woman that is wise.

6105

My fifthe husbonde, God his soule blesse,
 Which that I toke for love and no richesse,
 He somtime was a clerk of Oxenforde,
 And had left scole, and went at home at borde 6110
 With my gossib, dwelling in oure toun,
 God have hire soule! hire name was Alifoun.
 She knew my herte and all my privetee
 Bet than our parish preeft, so mote I the:
 To hire bewried I my conseil all, 6115
 For had my husbond pissed on a wall,
 Or don a thing that shuld have cost his lif,
 To hire, and to another worthy wif,
 And to my nece, which that I loved wel,
 I wold have told his conseil every del: 6120
 And so I did ful often, God it wote,
 That made his face ful often red and hote
 For veray shame, and blamed himself for he
 Had told to me so gret a privetee.

And so befell that ones in a Lent 6125
 (So often times I to my gossib went,
 For ever yet I loved to be gay,
 And for to walke in March, April, and May,

From hous to hous, to heren sondry tales)
That Jankin clerk, and my gossib Dame Ales, 6130
And I myself, into the feldes went.

Myn husbond was at London all that Lent:

6105 I had the better leifer for to pleie,
And for to see, and eke for to be seie
Of lusty folk. What wist I wher my grace 6135
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?

Therefore made I my visitations

orde 6110 To vigilies and to processions,
To prechings eke, and to thise pilgrimages,
To playes of miracles, and mariages, 6140
And wered upon my gay skarlet gites.

Thise wormes, ne thise mothes, ne thise mites,

6115 Upon my paraille frett hem never a del;
And wost thou why? for they were used wel.

Now wol I tellen forth what happed me. 6145

I say that in the feldes walked we

Till trewely we had swiche daliance

6120 This clerk and I, that of my purveance

I spake to him, and said him how that he,

If I weré widewe, shulde wedden me. 6150

For certainly, I say for no bobance,

Yet was I never without purveance

6125 ¶. 6137. *visitations*] *Rom. de la R.* 12492;

Souvent vaise a la mere Eglise,

Et face *visitations*

Aux nopces, aux processions,

Aux jeux, aux festes, aux caroles.—

¶. 6151. *bobance*] Boasting pride, Fr. "En orgueil et en bo-

Of mariage, ne of other thinges eke :
 I hold a mowfes wit not worth a leke
 That hath but on hole for to sterten to, 6155
 And if that faille than is all ydo.

I bare him on hond he had enchanted me,
 (My dame taughte me that subtiltee)
 And eke I sayd I mette of him all night,
 He wold han slain me as I lay upright, 6160
 And all my bed was ful of veray blood;
 But yet I hope that ye shuln do me good,
 For blood betokeneth gold, as me was taught.
 And al was false, I dremed of him right naught,
 But as I folwed ay my dames lore 6165
 As wel of that as of other thinges more.

But now, Sire, let me see, what shall I sain?
 A ha! by God I have my Tale again.
 Whan that my fourthe husbonde was on bere
 I wept algate and made a sory chere, 6170
 As wives moten, for it is the usage,
 And with my coverchefe covered my visage;
 But for that I was purveyed of a make
 I wept but smal, and that I undertake.
 To chirche was myn husbond born a-morwe 6175
 With neigheboures that for him maden forewe,
 And Jankin cure clerk was on of tho :
 As helpe me God, whan that I saw him go

bans," Froissart, v. iv. c. 70. In the editt. it is bostance. The thought in the next lines is taken from Rom. de la R. 13914;

*Moult a souris poure recours.
 Et met en grand peril la druge,
 Qui n'a qu'ung partuis a refuge.*

After the bere me thought he had a paire
 Of legges and of feet so clene and faire 6180
 That all my herte I yave unto his hold.
 He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,
 And I was fourty, if I shal say soth,
 But yet I had alway a coltes toth.
 Gat-tothed I was, and that became me wele; 6185
 I had the print of Seint Venus sele.
 As helpe me God I was a lusty on,
 And faire and riche, and yonge, and wel begon;
 And trewely, as min hufbondes tolden me,
 I had the beste queint that mighte be, 6190
 For certes I am all Venerian
 In seling, and my herte is Martian:
 Venus me yave my lust and likerousnesse,
 And Mars yave me my sturdy hardinesse.
 Min ascendent was Taure, and Mars therinne:
 Alas, alas! that ever love was sinne! 6196
 I solwed ay min inclination
 By vertue of my constellation;
 That made me that I coude nat withdraw
 My chambre of Venus from a good felaw; 6200
 Yet have I Martes merke upon my face,
 And also in another privee place:

v. 6191—4.] These four lines are wanting in mss. *A. A.*
 1, 2, and several others; and so are the eight lines from ver.
 6201 to ver. 6208 incl.: they certainly might very well be
 spared.

For God so wisly be my salvation
 I loved never by no discretion,
 But ever folwed min appetit, 6205
 All were he shorte, longe, blacke, or white:
 I toke no kepe, so that he liked me,
 How poure he was, ne eke of what degree.
 What shulde I saye? but at the monthes ende
 This joly clerk Jankin, that was so hende, 6210
 Hath wedded me with gret solempnitce,
 And to him yave I all the lond and fee
 That ever was me yeven therbefore,
 But afterward repented me ful sore.
 He n'olde suffre nothing of my list: 6215
 By God he smote me ones with his fist,
 For that I rent out of his book a lefe,
 That of the stroke myn ere wex al dese.
 Stibborne I was as is a leoneffe,
 And of my tonge a veray jangleresse; 6220
 And walke I wold, as I had don beforn,
 Fro hous to hous, although he had it sworn,
 For which he oftentimes wold preche,
 And me of olde Romaine gestes teche.

¶. 6216. *with his fist*] Ms. A. reads—*on the lyfte*—and so does
 ed. Ca. 2, with the addition of (what was at first a marginal
 gloss) *on the cheke*. In support of this reading it may be obser-
 ved that Sir Thomas More, among many Chaucerian phrases,
 has this in his *Merry Jest of a Sergeant*, &c.

And with his fist

Upon the lyft

He gave him such a blow.—

How he Sulpitius Gallus lest his wif,
 And hire forsoke for terme of all his lif,
 Not but for open-heded he hire say
 Loking out at his dore upon a day.

Another Romaine told he me by name,
 That for his wif was at a sommer game
 Without his weting he forsoke hire eke.

And than wold he upon his Bible seke
 That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
 Wher he commandeth, and forbedeth faste,
 Man shal not suffer his wif go roule aboute.

Than wold he say right thus withouten doute,
 Who so that bildeth his hous all of salwes,
 And priketh his blind hors over the salwes,
 And suffereth his wif to go seken halwes,
 Is worthy to be honged on the galwes.

But all for nought; I fette not an hawe
 Of his proverbes ne of his elde sawe;

¶ 6227. *open-heded*] This is literally from *Fal. Max.* l. vi. c. 3; "Uxorem dimisit, quod eam capite aperto foris versatam cognoverat." He gives the reason of this severity; "Lex enim tibi meos tantum præfinit oculos, quibus formam tuam approbes. His decoris instrumenta compara: his esto speciosa," &c.

¶ 6230. *a sommer game*] This expression, I suppose, took its rise from the summer being the usual season for games. It is used in *P. P.* fol. 27;

I have lever here an harlotry or a somers game—
 This story is also from *Fal. Max.* l. vi. c. 3; "P. Sempronius Sophus—conjugem repudii notâ affectit, nihil aliud quam se ignorante ludas ausum spectare."

Ne I wold not of him corrected be.
 I hate hem that my vices tellen me,
 And so do mo of us (God wote) than I. 6245
 This made him wood with me all utterly;
 I n'olde not forbere him in no cas.

Now wol I say you soth, by Seint Thomas,
 Why that I rent out of his book a lefe,
 For which he smote me so that I was dese. 6250

He had a book that gladly night and day
 For his disport he wolde it rede alway;
 He cleped it Valerie and Theophrast,
 And with that book he lough alway ful fast.
 And eke ther was a clerk somtime at Rome, 6255
 A cardinal, that highte Seint Jerome,
 That made a book again Jovinian,
 Which book was ther, and eke Tertullian,
 Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowis,
 That was abbessē not fer fro Paris, 6260

¶ 6253. *Valerie and Theophrast*] Some account has been given of these two treatises in the *Discourse*, &c. n. 19. As to the rest of the contents of this volume, Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and Tertullian *de Pallio*, are sufficiently known; and so are the Letters of Eloisa and Abelard, the Parables of Solomon, and Ovid's Art of Love. I know of no *Trotula* but one, whose book "*Curandarum ægritudinum muliebrium ante, in, et post partum*," is printed *int. Medicos antiquos*, Ven. 1547. What is meant by *Crisippus* I cannot guess.

¶ 6258. *Which book was ther*] I have here departed from the mss. which all read—In *which book ther was eke*.—Perhaps, however, it might be sufficient to put a full stop after Jovinian.

And eke the Paraboles of Salomon,
Ovides Art, and bourdes many on;
6245 And alle thise were bonden in o volume.

And every night and day was his custume
(Whan he had leifer and vacation
From other wordly occupation)

6265

To reden in this book of wikked wives:
6250 He knew of hem mo legendes and mo lives
Than ben of goode wives in the Bible.

For trusteth wel it is an impossible
That any clerk wol speken good of wives,
(But if it be of holy seintes lives)

6270

Ne of non other woman never the mo.
Who peinted the leon, telleth me who?

By God if wimmen hadden written stories,
6275 As clerkes han, within hir oratories,
They wold have writ of men more wikkednesse

Than all the merke of Adam may redresse.

The children of Mercury and of Venus

Ben in hir werking ful contrarious.

6280

Mercury loveth wisdom and science,

And Venus loveth riot and dispence;

And for hir divers disposition

Eche falleth in others exaltation:

¶ 6284. *exaltation*] In the old astrology a planet was said to be in its *exaltation* when it was in that sign of the zodiack in which it was supposed to exert its strongest influence; the opposite sign was called its *dejection*, as in that it was supposed to be weakest. To take the instance in the text, the *exaltation* of Venus was in Pices, [See also ver. 10587,] and her *de-*

As thus; God wote Mercury is desolat 6285
 In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat, 11
 And Venus falleth wher Mercury is reised,
 Therfore no woman of no clerk is preised.
 The clerk whan he is old, and may nought do
 Of Venus werkes not worth his old sho, 6290
 Than siteth he down and writeth in his dotage
 That wimmen cannot kepe hir mariage.
 But now to purpos why I tolde thee
 That I was beten for a book parde.

Upon a night Jankin, that was our fire, 6295
 Red on his book as he sate by the fire,
 Of Eva first, that for hire wikkednesse
 Was all mankinde brought to wretchednesse,
 For which that Jesu Crist himself was slain,
 That bought us with his herte blood again, 6300

Lo here expresse of wimmen may ye find
 That woman was the losse of all mankind.

Tho redde he me how Sampson lost his heres,
 Sleping his lemman kitte hem with hire sheres,
 Thurgh whiche trefon lost he both his eyen. 6305

Tho redde he me, if that I shal not lien,

jection of course in Virgo; but in Virgo was the *exaltation* of
 Mercury;

She is the welthe and the *ryfynge*,
 The lust, the joy, and the *lykyng*,
 Unto Mercury,—

Gorver, Conf. Amant. l. vii. fol. 147. So in ver. 10098, Cancer
 is called *Joves exaltation*.

¶ 6303. *Tho redde he*] Most of the following instances are
 mentioned in the *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducendâ*
uxore. See also *Rom. de la R.* 9140, 9615, *et suiv.*

6285

Of Hercules, and of his Deianire,
That caused him to set himself a-fire.

Nothing forgot he the care and the wo

That Socrates had with his wives two;

6310

How Xantippa cast pisse upon his hed.

6290

This sely man sat still as he were ded;

He wiped his hed; no more dorst he sain

But, Er the thonder flint ther cometh rain.

Of Pasiphae, that was the Quene of Crete, 6315

For shrewednesse him thought the tale swete.

6295

Fie! speke no more (it is a grisely thing)

Of hire horrible lust and hire liking.

Of Clitemnestra, for hire lecherie

That falsely made hire husbond for to die,

6320

He redde it with ful good devotion.

6300

He told me eke for what occasion

Amphiorax at Thebes lost his lif:

My husbond had a legend of his wif

Eriphile, that for an ouche of gold

6325

Hath prively unto the Grekes told

Wher that hire husbond hidde him in a place,

For which he had at Thebes fory grace.

Of Lima told he me, and of Lucie;

They bothe made hir husbondes for to die, 6330

v. 6329. *Of Lima—and of Lucie*] In the *Epistola Valerii*, &c. m. Reg. 12. D. iii, the story is told thus; “*Luna virum suum interfecit quem nimis odivit: Lucilia suum quem nimis amavit. Illa sponte miscuit aconita: hæc decepta furorem pro-*”
“*pinavit pro amoris poculo.*” *Lima* and *Luna* in many mss. are only distinguishable by a small stroke over the *i*, which may be easily overlooked where it is, and supposed where it is not.

Cancer

ances are
Lucend?

That on for love, that other was for hate.
 Lima hire husbond on an even late
 Enpoysoned hath, for that she was his so:
 Lucia likerous loved hire husbond so,
 That for he shuld alway upon hire thinke 6335
 She yave him swiche a maner love-drinke
 That he was ded er it were by the morwe:
 And thus algates husbondes hadden sorwe.

Than told he me how on Latumeus
 Complained to his felaw Arius 6340
 That in his gardin growed swiche a tree,
 On which he said how that his wives three
 Honged hemself for hertes despitous.
 O leve brother! quod this Arius,
 Yeve me a plant of thilke blessed tree, 6345
 And in my gardin planted shal it be.

Of later date of wives hath he redde,
 That som han slain hir husbondes in hir bedde,
 And let hir lechour dight hem all the night,
 While that the corps lay in the flore upright; 6350
 And som han driven nailes in hir brain,
 While that they slepe, and thus they han hem slain;
 Som han hem yeven poyson in hir drink:
 He spake more harm than herte may bethinke.

And therwithall he knew of mo proverbes 6355
 Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.

¶ 6339. *Latumeus*] In mss. *Ask.* 1, 2, it is *Latynius*; in the *Epistola Valerii* just cited, *Pavorinus flens ait Arrio.*—

¶ 6355. *mo proverbes*] For the following aphorisms see *Proverbia*.

Bet is (quod he) thin habitation
 Be with a leon or a foule dragon
 Than with a woman using for to chide.

Bet is (quod he) high in the roof abide 6360
 Than with an angry woman down in the hous,
 They ben so wikked and contrarious:
 They haten that hir husbondes loven ay.

He sayd a woman cast hire shame away
 Whan she cast of hire smock; and forther mo, 6365
 A faire woman, but she be chaste also,
 Is like a gold ring in a sowes nose.

Who coude wene or who coude suppose
 The wo that in min herte was and the pine?
 And whan I saw he n'olde never fine 6370

To reden on this cursed book all night,
 Al sodenly three leves have I plight
 Out of his book, right as he redde, and eke
 I with my fist so toke him on the cheke
 That in oure fire he fell backward adoun; 6375

And he up sterte as doth a wood leoun,
 And with his fist he smote me on the hed,
 That in the flore I lay as I were ded.
 And whan he saw how stille that I lay
 He was agast, and wold have fled away, 6380
 Til at the last out of my swough I brayde.
 O! hast thou slain me, false thief? I sayde,

xxi. 9. 19, and xi. 22. The observation in ver. 6364 is in *Herodotus*, b. i. p. 5, ed. *Wesseling*.

And for my lond thus hast thou mordred me?

Er I be ded yet wol I kissen thee,

And nere he came, and kneled faire adoun, 6385

And sayde, Dere suster Alifoun!

As helpe me God I shal thee never smite:

That I have don it is thyself to wite;

Foryeve it me, and that I thee beseke.

And yet estfones I hitte him on the cheke, 6390

And sayde, Theef, thus much am I awreke.

Now wol I die, I may no longer speke.

But at the last, with mochel care and wo,

We sell accorded by ourselven two.

He yaf me all the bridel in min hond 6395

To han the governance of hous and lond,

And of his tonge and of his hond also,

And made him brenne his book anon right tho.

And whan that I had gotten unto me

By maistrie all the soverainetee, 6400

And that he sayd, Min owen trewe wif,

Do as thee list the terme of all thy lif;

Kepe thin honour, and kepe eke min estat;

After that day we never had debat.

God helpe me so, I was to him as kinde 6405

As any wif fro Denmark unto Inde,

And al so trewe, and so was he to me:

I pray to God that sit in majestee

So blisse his soule, for his mercy dere.

Now wol I say my Tale if ye wol here. 6410

The Frere lough whan he had herd all this :
 Now, Dame, quod he, so have I joye and blis,
 This is a long preamble of a Tale.

And whan the Sompnour herd the Frere gale,
 Lo (quod this Sompnour) Goddes armes two, 6415
 A Frere wol entermete him evermo :

Lo, goode men, a flie and eke a Frere
 Wol fall in every dish and eke matere.
 What spekest thou of preambulation ?
 What ? amble or trot, or pees, or go sit doun : 6420
 Thou lettest our disport in this matere.

Ye, wolt thou so, Sire Sompnour ? quod the Frere ;
 Now by my faith I shal, er that I go,
 Tell of a Sompnour swiche a Tale or two,
 That all the folk shal laughen in this place. 6425

Now elles, Frere, I wol beshrewe thy face,
 (Quod this Sompnour) and I beshrewe me
 But if I telle Tales two or three
 Of Freres, or I come to Sidenborne,
 That I shal make thin herte for to morne, 6430
 For wel I wot thy patience is gone.

Our Hoste cried, Pees, and that anon ;

¶ 6414. *the Sompnour herd the Frere gale*] The same word occurs below, ver. 6918, "and let the Sompnour *gale*." In both places it seems to be used metaphorically. *Galan*, Sax. signifies *canere*. It is used literally in *The Court of Love*, ver. 1357, where the nightingale is said—to crie and *gale* ; hence its name *nigbtgale* or *nigbtengale*. In the *Island*. *at gala* is *ululare*, *Galli more exclamare* ; and *Hana gal*, *Gallicinium*. *Gudm. Ant. Lex. Island.*

And sayde, Let the woman tell hire Tale;
 Ye fare as folk that dronken ben of ale.
 Do, Dame, tell forth your Tale, and that is best. 6435
 Al redy, Sire, quod she, right as you lest,
 If I have licence of this worthy Frere.
 Yes, Dame, quod he, tell forth, and I wol here.

THE WIF OF BATHES TALE.

IN olde dayes of the King Artour,
 Of which that Bretons speken gret honour, 6440
 All was this lond fulfilled of Faerie;
 The Elf quene with hire joly compaignie

The Wif of Bathes Tale] A bachelor of King Arthur's court is enjoined by the Queen, upon pain of death, to tell what thing it is that women do most desire. At length he is taught it by an old woman, whom he is enforced to marry. *Urry*.

¶ 6439. *King Artour*] I hope that Chaucer, by placing his Elf-quene in the dayes of King Artour, did not mean to intimate that the two monarchies were equally fabulous and visionary. Master Wace has judged more candidly of the exploits of our British hero;

Ne tut menfonge, ne tut veir;

Ne tut folie, ne tut savoir.

Tant unt li conteor conte,

E li fableor tant fable,

Pur les contes enbelecer,

Ke tut unt fait fable sembler. *Le Brut*, ms. Cotton, Vitell. A. 7.

¶ 6441. *Faerie*] *Féerie*, Fr. from *fée*, the French name for those fantastical beings which in the Gothick languages are called *Alfs* or *Elves*. The corresponding names to *fée* in the other romance dialects are *fata*, Ital. and *bada*, Span.; so that it is probable that all three are derived from the Lat. *fatum*, which in the barbarous ages was corrupted into *fatus* and *fata*. See *Ménage*, in v. *Fée*. *Du Cange*, in v. *Fadus*. — Our system of Faerie would have been much more complete if all our ancient writ-

* I have
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Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.

This was the old opinion as I rede;

ers had taken the same laudable pains to inform us upon that head that Gervase of Tilbery has done, *Ot. Imp. Dec.* lii. c. 61, 2. He mentions two species of dæmons in England which I do not recollect to have met with in any other author. The first are those "Quos Galli Neptunos, Angli Portunos, nominant." Of the others he says—"Est in Angliâ quoddam dæmonum genus, quod suo idiomate Grant nominant adinstar pulli equini anniculi, tibiis erectum, oculis scintillantibus," &c. —This last seems so have been a dæmon *sui generis*, but the *Portunus* appears to have resembled the *Gobelin*, as described by *Orderic. Vital.* l. v. p. 556: speaking of the miracles of St. Taurinus at Evreux in Normandy he says—"Dæmon enim, quem de Dianæ phano expulit, adhuc in eadem urbe degit, et in variis frequenter formis apparens neminem lædit. Hunc vulgus *Gobelinum* appellat, et per merita Sancti Taurini ab humanâ læsione coercitum usque hodie affirmat."—In the same manner Gervase says of the *Portuni*, "Id illis insitum est, ut obsequi possint et obesse non possint." He adds indeed an exception; "Verum unicum quasi modulum nocendi habent. Cum enim inter ambiguas noctis tenebras Angli solitarii quandoque equitant, *Portunus* nonnunquam invisus equitanti se se copulat, et cum diutius comitatur euntem, tandem loris arreptis equum in lutum ad manum ducit, in quo dum infixos volutatur, *Portunus* exiers *cachinnum* facit, et sic huiuscemodi ludibrio humanam simplicitatem deridet."—This is exactly such a prank as our *Hob* (or *Hop*) *goblin* was used to play. See the *Midsom. Night's Dream*, act ii. sc. 1, and Drayton's *Nymphidia* *.—It should be observed that the *Portuni* (according to Gervase) were of the true Faery size; "staturâ pusilli, dimidium pollicis non habentes." But

* I shall here correct a mistake of my own in the *Disc. Sc.* n. 23. I have supposed that Shakespeare might have followed Drayton in his Faery system. I have since observed that *Don Quixote* (which was not published till 1605) is cited in *The Nymphidia*, whereas we have an edition of *The Midsom. Night's Dream* in 1600; so that Drayton undoubtedly followed Shakespeare.

I speke of many hundred yeres ago, 6445
 But now can no man see non elves mo;
 For now the grete charitee and prayeres
 Of limitoures and other holy freres,
 That serchen every land and every streme,
 As thikke as motes in the sonne beme, 6450
 Blissing halles, chambres, kichenes, and boures,
 Citees and burghes, castles highe and toures,
 Thropes and bernes, shepenes and dairies,
 This maketh that ther ben no Faeries :
 For ther as went to walken was an elf, 6455
 Ther walketh now the limitour himself
 In undermeles and in morweninges,
 And sayth his matines and his holy thinges
 As he goth in his limitatioun.
 Women may now go safely up and down, 6460

then indeed they were "senili vultu, facie corrugatâ." In *Dec. i. c. 18*, he describes another species of harmless dæmons called *Folleti*; *Esprits Follets*, Fr. *Folletti*, Ital.----The *Incubus*, mentioned below, ver. 6462, was a Faery of not quite so harmless a nature. He succeeded to the ancient *Fauni*, and like them was supposed to inflict that oppression which goes under the name of the *ephialtes* or *nightmare*. Pliny calls the *ephialtes* *Faunorum in quiete ludibria*, *N. H. l. 25. x.* The *Incubus* however, as Chaucer insinuates, exerted his powers for love as well as for hate, *Gervaf. Tilber. Dec. i. c. 17*; "Vidimus quosdam Dæmones tanto Zelo mulieres amare quod ad inaudita prorumpunt ludibria, et cum ad concubitum earum accedunt mirâ mole eas opprimunt, nec ab aliis videntur."

♀. 6457. *undermeles*] 'The undermele, i. e. *undern-mele*, was the dianer of our ancestors. See the n. on ver. 8136.

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In every bush, and under every tree,
 Ther is non other Ipcubus but he,
 And he ne will don hem no dishonour.

And so befell it that this King Artour
 Had in his hous a lusty bachelor, 6465

That on a day came riding fro river :
 And happed that, alone as she was borne,
 He saw a maiden walking him beforne,
 Of which maid he anon, maugre hire hed,
 By veray force beraft hire maidenhed : 6470

For which oppression was swiche clamour,
 And swiche pursuite unto the King Artour,
 That damned was this knight for to be ded
 By cours of lawe, and shuld have lost his hed,
 (Paraventure swiche was the statute tho) 6475

But that the quene and other ladies mo
 So longe praieden the king of grace,
 Til he his lif him granted in the place,

¶. 6466. *came riding fro river*] Or *fro the river*, as it is in some mss.: it means from hawking at waterfowl, *Froiss.* v. i. c. 140; "Le Comte de Flandres estoit tousjours *en riviere*—un jour advint qu'il alla volder *en la riviere*—et getta son Fauconnier un faucon *apres le beron*, et le Comte aussi un."—So in c. 210, he says that Edw. III. had with him in his army—"trente fauconniers à cheval, chargez d'oiseaux, et bien soixante couples de forts chiens et autant de levriers: dont il alloit, chacun jour ou en chace ou *en riviere*, ainsi que il luy plaisoit." Sire Thopas is described as following this knightly sport, ver. 13665;

He coude hunte at the wilde dere,
 And ride on hauking *for the rivere*,
 With grey gohawk en honde.

And yaf him to the quene, all at hire will
To chese whether she wold him save or spill. 6480

The quene thanketh the king with al hire might;
And after this thus spake she to the knight,
Whan that she saw hire time upon a day.

Thou standest yet (quod she) in swiche array,
That of thy lif yet hast thou not seuretee; 6485
I grant thee lif if thou canst tellen me
What thing is it that women most desiren:
Beware, and keppe thy nekke bone from yren.
And if thou canst not tell it me anon,
Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon 6490
A twelvemonth and a day to seke and lere
An answer sufficient in this matere;
And seuretee wol I have, or that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place.

Wo was the knight, and forwefully he siketh: 6495
But what? he may not don all as him liketh.
And at the last he chese him for to wende,
And come agen right at the yeres ende
With swiche answer as God wold him purvay,
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his way. 6500

He seketh every hous and every place,
Wher as he hopeth for to finden grace,
To lernen what thing women loven moste;
But he ne coude ariven in no coste
Wher as he mighte find in this matere 6505
Two creatures according in fere.

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Som saiden women loven best richesse,
Som saiden honour, som saiden jolineffe,
Som riche array, som saiden lust a-bedde,
And oft time to be widewe and to be wedde. 6510

Some saiden that we ben in herte most esed
Whan that we ben yflatered and ypreised.
He goth ful nigh the soth, I wol not lie;
A man shal winne us best with flaterie;
And with attendance and with besineffe 6515
Ben we ylimed bothe more and lesse.

And som men saiden that we loven best
For to be free, and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of our vice,
But say that we ben wise and nothing nice: 6520
For trewely ther n'is non of us all,
If any wight wol claw us on the gall,
That we n'ill kike for that he saith us soth;
Assay, and he shal find it that so doth:
For be we never so vicious withinne 6525
We wol be holden wise and clene of sinne.

And som saiden that gret delit han we
For to be holden stable and eke secre,
And in o purpos stedfastly to dwell,
And not bewreyen thing that men us tell; 6530
But that tale is not worth a rake-stele.

Parde we women connen nothing hele,
Witnesse on Mida; wol ye here the Tale?

Ovide, amonges other thinges smale,

Said Mida had under his longe heres 6535
 Growing upon his hed two asses eres,
 The whiche vice he hid, as he beste might,
 Ful subtilly from every mannes sight,
 That save his wif ther wist of it no mo;
 He loved hire most, and trusted hire also; 6540
 He praied hire that to no creature
 She n'olde tellen of his disfigure.

She swore him Nay, for all the world to winne
 She nolde do that vilanie ne finne,
 To make hire husbond han so foule a name: 6545
 She n'olde not tell it for hire owen shame.
 But natheles hire thoughte that she dide
 That she so longe shuld a conseil hide;
 Hire thought it swal so fore aboute hire herte,
 That nedely som word hire must aserte; 6550
 And sith she dorst nat telle it to no man,
 Doun to a marcis faste by she ran;
 Til she came ther hire herte was a-fire:
 And as a bitore bumbleth in the mire,
 She laid hire mouth unto the water doun. 6555
 Bewrey me not, thou water, with thy soun,
 Quod she; to thee I tell it, and no mo,
 Min husbond hath long asses eres two.
 Now is min herte all hole, now is it out,
 I might no lenger kepe it out of dout. 6560
 Here may ye see, though we a time abide,
 Yet out it moske; we can no conseil hide.

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The remenant of the Tale, if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovide, and ther ye may it lere.

This knight, of which my Tale is specially, 6565
Whan that he saw he might not come therby,
(This is to sayn, what women loven most)

Within his brest ful sorweful was his goft.
But home he goth, he mighte not sojourne;
The day was come that homward must he turne.

And in his way it happed him to ride, 6571

In all his care, under a forest side,

Wheras he saw upon a dance go

Of ladies foure-and-twenty, and yet mo.

Toward this ilke dance he drow ful yerne, 6575

In hope that he som wisdom shulde lerne;

But certainly er he came fully there

Yvanished was this dance he n'iste not wher;

No creature saw he that bare lif,

Save on the grene he saw sitting a wif, 6580

A fouler wight ther may no man devise.

Againe this knight this olde wif gan arise,

And said, Sire Knight, here forth ne lith no way.

Tell me what that ye seken by your fay,

Paraventure it may the better be: 6585

Thise olde folk con mochel thing, quod she.

My leve mother, quod this knight, certain

I n'am but ded but if that I can fain

What thing it is that women most desire:

Coude ye me wisse I wold quite wel your hire. 6590

Plight me thy trouthe here in myn hond, quod she,
 The nexte thing that I requere of thee
 Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might,
 And I wol tell it you or it be night.

Have here my trouthe, quod the knight, I graunte.

Thanne, quod she, I dare me wel avaunte 6596
 Thy lif is sauf, for I wol stond therby,
 Upon my lif the queene wol say as I.
 Let see which is the proudest of hem alle,
 That wereth on a kerchief or a calle, 6600
 That dare sayn nay of that I shal you teche.
 Let us go forth withouten lenger speche.

Tho rowned she a piffel in his ere,
 And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.

Whan they ben comen to the court, this knight
 Said he had hold his day as he had hight, 6606
 And redy was his answer, as he saide.
 Ful many a noble wif, and many a maide,
 And many a widewe, for that they ben wise,
 (The queene hireself sitting as a justice) 6610
 Asssembled ben his answer for to here,
 And afterward this knight was bode appere.

To every wight commanded was silence,
 And that the knight shuld tell in audience
 What thing that worldly women loven best. 6615
 This knight ne stood not still as doth a best,
 But to this question anon answerd
 With manly vois, that all the court it herd.

My liege Lady, generally, quod he,
 Women desiren to han soverainetee, 6620
 As well over hir husbond as hir love,
 And for to ben in maistrie him above.
 This is your most desire, though ye me kille;
 Doth as you list, I am here at your wille.

In all the court ne was ther wif ne maide, 6625
 Ne widewe, that contraried that he saide,
 But said he was worthy to han his lif.

And with that word up stert this olde wif
 Which that the knight saw sitting on the grene.
 Mercy, quod she, my soveraine lady Quene, 6630
 Er that your court depart, as doth me right.
 I taughte this answer unto this knight,
 For which he plighte me his trouthe there
 The firste thing I wold of him requere
 He wold it do, if it lay in his might. 6635

Before this court than pray I thee, Sire Knight,
 Quod she, that thou me take unto thy wif,
 For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lif:
 If I say false say nay upon thy fay.

This knight answered, Alas and wala wa! 6640
 I wot right wel that swiche was my behest.
 For Goddes love as chese a new request:
 Take all my good, and let my body go.

Nay than, quod she, I shrewe us bothe two:
 For though that I be olde, soule, and pore, 6645
 In'olde for all the metal ne the ore

That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wif I were and eke thy love.

My love! quod he; nay, my dampnation.
Alas! that any of my nation 6650
Shuld ever so foule disparaged be.

But all for nought; the end is this, that he
Constrained was he nedes must hire wed,
And taketh this olde wif, and goth to bed.

Now wolden som men sayn paraventure, 6655
That for my negligence I do no cure
To tellen you the joye and all the array
That at the feste was that ilke day.

To which thing shortly answeren I shal:
I say ther was no joye ne feste at al, 6660
Ther n'as but hevinesse and mochel sorwe;
For prively he wedded hire on the morwe,
And all day after hid him as an oule,
So wo was him his wif loked so foule.

Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought 6665
Whan he was with his wif a-bed ybrought;
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.

This olde wif lay smiling evermo,
And said, O dere hufbond, *benedicite!*
Fareth every knight thus with his wif as ye? 6670
Is this the lawe of King Artoures hous?
Is every knight of his thus dangerous?
I am your owen love, and eke your wif,
I am she which that saved hath your lif,

And certes yet did I you never unright; 6675
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?

Ye faren like a man had lost his wit.
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tell it,
And it shal ben amended if I may.

Amended! quod this knight, alas! nay, nay, 6680
It wol not ben amended never mo;

Thou art so lothly, and so olde also,
And therto comen of so low a kind,
That litel wonder is though I walwe and wind;
So wolde God min herte wolde brest. 6685

Is this, quod she, the cause of your unrest?

Ye certainly, quod he, no wonder is.

Now Sire, quod she, I coude amend all this,
If that me list, er it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighten bere you unto me. 6690

But for ye speken of swiche gentilleffe
As is descended out of old richeffe,
That therfore shullen ye be gentilmen;
Swiche arrogance n'is not worth an hen.

Loke who that is most vertuous alway, 6695
Prive and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And take him for the gretest gentilman.
Crist wol we claime of him our gentilleffe,
Not of our elders for hir old richeffe; 6700

For though they yeve us all hir heritage,
For which we claime to ben of high parage,

Yet may they not bequethen for no thing
 To non of us hir vertuous living,
 That made hem gentilmen called to be, 6705
 And bade us solwen hem in swiche degree.

Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
 That highte Dant, speken of this sentence :
 Lo in swiche maner rime is Dantes tale.

Ful felde up riseth by his branches smale 6710
 Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse
 Wol that we claime of him our gentilleffe ;
 For of our elders may we nothing claime
 But temporel thing, that man may hurt and maimc.

Eke every wight wot this as wel as I, 6715
 If gentilleffe were planted naturelly
 Unto a certain linage down the line,
 Prive and apert, than wold they never fine
 To don of gentilleffe the faire office ;
 They mighten do no vilanie or vice. 6720

Take fire, and bere it into the derkest hous
 Betwix this and the Mount of Caucasus,
 And let men shette the dores, and go thenne,
 Yet wol the fire as faire lie and brenne
 As twenty thousand men might it behold ; 6725
 His office naturel ay wol it hold,
 Up peril of my lif, til that it die.

Here may ye see wel how that genterie

✧. 6710. *Ful felde up riseth*] Dante, *Purg.* vii. 121;

Rade volte risurge per li rami

L'humana probitate: et questo vuole

Quel che la da, perche da se si chiama.

Is not annexed to possession,
 Sith folk ne don hir operation 6730
 Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind :
 For God it wot men moun ful often find
 A lordes sone do shame and vilanie.
 And he that wol han pris of his genterie,
 For he was boren of a gentil hous, 6735
 And had his elders noble and vertuous,
 And n'ill himselven do no gentil dedes,
 Ne solwe his gentil auncestrie that ded is,
 He n'is not gentil, be he duk or erl,
 For vilains sinful dedes make a cherl : 6740
 For gentilleffe n'is but the renomee
 Of thin auncestres for hir high bountee,
 Which is a strange thing to thy persone :
 Thy gentilleffe cometh fro God alone ;
 Than cometh our veray gentilleffe of grace ; 6745
 It was no thing bequethed us with our place.

Thinketh how noble, as faith Valerius,
 Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
 That out of poverte rose to high noblesse.
 Redeth Senek, and redeth eke Boece, 6750
 Ther shull ye seen expresse that it no dred is
 That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis :

ψ. 6741. For gentilleffe] A great deal of this reasoning is copied from Boethius de Consol. l. iii. pr. 6. See also R. R. 2180, et seq. ;

For villanie maketh villeine,
 And by his dedes a chorle is seine, &c.

And therefore, leve husband, I thus conclude,
 Al be it that min auncestres weren rude,
 Yet may the highe God, and so hope I, 6755
 Granten me grace to liven vertuously;
 Than am I gentil whan that I beginne
 To liven vertuously and weiven sinne.

And ther as ye of poverte me repreve,
 The highe God, on whom that we beleve, 6760
 In wilful poverte chese to lede his lif;
 And certes every man, maiden, or wif,
 May understond that Jesus heven king
 Ne wold not chese a vicious living.

Glad poverte is an honest thing certain, 6765
 This wol Senek and other clerkes sain.
 Who so that halt him paid of his poverte
 I hold him rich, al had he not a sherte.
 He that coveiteth is a poure wight,
 For he wold han that is not in his might; 6770
 But he that nought hath, ne coveiteth to have,
 Is riche, although ye hold him but a knave.
 Veray poverte is sinne proprely.

Juvenal saith of poverte merily,
 The poure man whan he goth by the way, 6775
 Beforn the theves he may sing and play.
 Poverte is hateful good; and, as I gesse,
 A ful gret bringer out of besinesse;

☆. 6777. *Poverte is hateful good*] In this commendation of poverty our Author seems plainly to have had in view the following passage of a fabulous conference between the Emperor Adrian and Secundus the philosopher, reported by Vin-

A gret amender eke of sapience
To him that taketh it in patience. 6780

Poverté is this, although it seme elenge,
Possession that no wight wol challenge.
Poverté ful often, whan a man is low,
Maketh his God and eke himself to know.
Poverté a spectakel is, as thinketh me, 6785
Thurgh which he may his veray frendes see.
And therfore, Sire, sin that I you not greve,
Of my poverté no more me repreve.

Now, Sire, of elde that ye repreven me :
And certes, Sire, though non auctoritee 6790
Were in no book, ye gentiles of honour
Sain that men shuld an olde wight honour,
And clepe him Fader, for your gentilleste ;
And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.

Now ther ye sain that I am foule and old, 6795
Than drede ye not to ben a cokewold ;

cent of Beauvais, *Spec. Histor.* l. x. c. 71 ; " Quid est Pauper-
" tas? Odibile bonum ; sanitatis mater ; remotio curarum ; sa-
" pientie repertrix ; negotium sine damno ; possessio absque ca-
" lumnia ; sine sollicitudine felicitas." What Vincent has there
published appears to have been extracted from a larger collec-
tion of Gnomæ under the name of *Secundus*, which are still ex-
tant in Greek and Latin. See *Fabric. Bib. Gr.* l. vi. c. x, and
ms. *Harl.* 399. The author of *Pierce Ploughman* has quoted
and paraphrased the same passage, fol. 75.

¶. 6781. *elenge*] Strange ; probably from the old Fr. *espoingné*.
So in *The Cuckoo and Nightingale*, ver. 115 ;

Thy songes ben so *elenge* in good fay.

And in *P. P.* fol. 3, b. ;

Where the cat is a kiten the court is full *elenge*.

See fol. 46, b. See also *Gloss.* in v. *Elenge*.

For filthe, and elde also, so mote I the,
 Ben grete wardeins upon chastitee.
 But natheles, sin I know your delit,
 I shal fulfill your worldly appetit. 6800

Chefe now (quod she) on of thise thinges twey,
 To han me foule and old til that I dey,
 And be to you a trewe humble wif,
 And never you displese in all my lif;
 Or elles wol ye han me yonge and faire, 6805
 And take your aventure of the repaire
 That shal be to your hous because of me,
 Or in som other place it may wel be?
 Now chefe yourselven whether that you liketh.

This knight aviseth him, and fore siketh, 6810
 But at the last he said in this manere :

My lady and my love, and wif so dere,
 I put me in your wise governance,
 Cheseth yourself which may be most plesance
 And most honour to you and me also, 6815
 I do no force the whether of the two,
 For as you liketh it sufficeth me.

Than have I got the maisterie, quod she,
 Sin I may chefe and governe as me lest.
 Ye certes, wif, quod he, I hold it best. 6820

Kisse me, quod she, we be no lenger wrothe,
 For by my trouth I wol be to you bothe,

¶ 6727. *For filthe, and elde also, so*] Though none of the mss. that I have seen authorize the insertion of the second *so* it seems absolutely necessary.

This is to sayn, ye bothe faire and good.
I pray to God that I mote steruen wood
But I to you be al so good and trewe 6825

As ever was wif sin that the world was newe,
And but I be to-morwe as faire to seen
As any lady, emperice, or quene,
That is betwix the est and eke the west,
Doth with my lif and deth right as you lest. 6830
Cast up the curtein, loke how that it is.

And whan the knight saw veraily all this,
That she so faire was, and so yonge therto,
For joye he hent hire in his armes two :
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse, 6835

A thousand time a-row he gan hire kisse :
And she obeyed him in every thing
That mighte don him plesance or liking.
And thus they live unto hir lives ende
In parfit joye ; and Jesu Crist us sende 6840

Husbondes meke and yonge, and fressh a-bed,
And grace to overlive hem that we wed.
And eke I pray Jesus to short hir lives
That wol not be governed by hir wives ;
And old and angry nigards of dispence
God send hem sone a veray pestilence. 6846

THE FRERES PROLOGUE.

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
 He made alway a maner louring chere
 Upon the Sompnour, but for honestee
 No vilains word as yet to him spake he; 6850
 But at the last he said unto the Wif,
 Dame, (quod he) God yeve you right good lif,
 Ye have here touched, all so mote I the,
 In scole matere a ful gret difficultie;
 Ye han said mochel thing right wel I say: 6855
 But, Dame, here as we riden by the way
 Us nedeth not to speken but of game,
 And let auctoritees, in Goddes name,
 To preching and to scole eke of clergie.
 But if it like unto this compaignie 6860
 I wol you of a Sompnour tell a game;
 Parde ye may wel knowen by the name
 That of a Sompnour may no good be said;
 I pray that non of you be evil apaid:
 A Sompnour is a renner up and down 6865
 With mandemens for fornicatioun,
 And is ybete at every tounes ende.

Tho spake our Hoste, A, Sire, ye shuld ben hende

†. 6858. *Auctoritees*] *Auctoritas* was the usual word for what we call a text of Scripture, ms. *Harl.* 106, 10; "Expositio *auctoritatis*, Majus gaudium super uno peccatore, *Ibid.* 21;
 "Exposito *auctoritatis*, Stetit populus de longe," &c.

And curteis, as a man of your estat,
In compaignie we wiln have no debat: 6870

Telleth your Tale, and let the Sompnour be.
Nay, quod the Sompnour, let him say by me
What so him list; whan it cometh to my lot
By God I shal him quiten every grot;
I shal him tellen which a gret honour 6875

It is to be a flatering limitour,
And eke of many another maner crime,
Which nedeth not reherfen at this time,
And his office I shal him tell ywis.
Our Hoste answered, Pees, no more of this. 6880
And afterward he said unto the Frere
Tel forth your Tale min owen maister dere.

THE FRERES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwelling in my contree
An archedeken, a man of high degree,
That boldely did execution 6885
In punishing of fornication,
Of witchecraft, and eke of bauderie,
Of defamation, and avouterie,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of sacraments, 6890
Of usure, and of simonie also,
But certes lechours did he gretest wo;

The Freres Tale] A Sompnour and the devil meeting on the way, after conference become sworn brethren, and to hell they go together. A covert invective against the bribery and corruption of the spiritual courts in those days. *Urry.*

They shulden singen if that they were hent,
 And smale titheres weren foule yshent;
 If any persone wold upon hem plaine 6895
 Ther might astert hem no pecunial peine.
 For smale tithes and smale offering
 He made the peple pitoufly to sing,
 For er the bishop hent hem with his crook
 They weren in the archedekens book; 6900
 Than had he thurgh his jurisdiction
 Power to don on hem correccion.

He had a Sompnour redy to his hond,
 A slier boy was non in Englelond;
 For subtilly he had his espiaille, 6905
 That taught him wel wher it might ought availle.
 He coude spare of lechours on or two
 To techen hem to foure-and-twenty mo:
 For though this Sompnour wood be as an hare,
 To tell his harlotrie I wol not spare, 6910
 For we ben out of hir correccion,
 They han of us no jurisdiction,
 Ne never shul have, terme of all hir lîves.

Peter, so ben the women of the slîves,
 Quod this Sompnour, yput out of our cure? 6915

Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,
 Our Hoste said, and let him tell his Tale.
 Now telleth forth, and let the Sompnour gale,
 Ne spaireth not, min owen maister dere.

This false theef, this Sompnour, quod the Frere,

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 Velum

Had alway baudes redy to his hond, 6991

As any hauke to lure in Englelond,

That told him all the secree that they knewe,

For hir acquaintance was not come of newe;

They weren his approvers prively: 6925

He tooke himself a gret profit therby,

His maister knew not alway what he wan.

Withouten mandement a lewed man

He coude sompne up peine of Cristes curse,

And they were inly glad to fille his purse, 6930

And maken him gret festes at the nale.

And right as Judas hadde purfes smale,

And was a theef, right swiche a theef was he;

His master hadde but half his duetee.

He was (if I shal yeven him his laud) 6935

A theef, and eke a Sompnour, and a baud.

He had eke wenches at his retenue,

That whether that Sire Robert or Sire Hue,

Or Jakke or Rauf, or who so that it were

That lay by hem, they told it in his ere. 6940

Thus was the wenche and he of on assent;

And he wold secche a feined mandement,

And sompne hem to the chapitre bothe two,

And pill the man and let the wenche go:

Than wold he say, Frend, I shal for thy sake 6945

Do strike thee out of oure lettres blake;

¶ 6931. *the nale*] The alehouse, P. P. fol. 32, b.;

And than sitten some and songe at *the nale*.

Skinner supposes it to be a corruption of *inn-ale*, which is not impossible. See *Gloss* in v. *Nale*.

Thee thar no more as in this cas travaille;
 I am thy frend ther I may thee availle.
 Certain he knew of briboures many mo
 Than possible is to tell in yeres two; 6950
 For in this world n'is dogge for the bowe
 That can an hurt dere from an hole yknowe
 Bet than this Sompnour knew a flie lechour,
 Or an avouter or a paramour;
 And for that was the fruit of all his rent, 6955
 Therfore on it he fet all his entent.

And so befell that ones on a day
 This Sompnour, waiting ever on his pray,
 Rode forth to sompne a widewe, an olde ribibe,
 Feining a cause, for he wold han a bribe; 6960
 And happed that he saw befor him ride
 A gay yeman under a forest side;
 A bow he bare, and arwes bright and kene,
 He had upon a courtepy of grene,
 An hat upon his hed with frenges blake. 6965

Sire, quod the Sompnour, haile, and wel atake.

v. 6959. *an olde ribibe*] He calls her below, ver. 7155, *an olde rebeke*. They were both names for the same musical instrument. See *Menage*, in v. *Rebec*. *Kibeba*, in *The Decameron*, ix. 5, is rendered by Macon, the old French translator, *rebe* and *guiterne*. Chaucer uses also the diminutive *ribible*, ver. 3331, 4395. How this instrument came to be put for an old woman I cannot guess, unless perhaps from its shrillness. An old writer, quoted by *Du Cange*, in v. *Baudéja*, has the following lines in his description of a concert;

Quidam *rebeccam* arcuabant
Muliebrem vocem confingentes.

Welcome, quod he, and every good felaw.
Whider ridest thou under this grene shaw?
(Saide this yeman) wolt thou fer to-day?

This Sompnour him answerd, and saide Nay. 6970
Here faste by (quod he) is min entent
To riden, for to reisen up a rent
That longeth to my lordes duetee.
A! art thou than a baillif? Ye, quod he.
(He dorste not for veray filth and shame 6975
Say that he was a Sompnour for the name.)

De per dieux, quod this yeman, leve brother,
Thou art a baillif, and I am another.
I am unknowen as in this contree;
Of thin acquaintance I wol prayen thee, 6980
And eke of brotherhed, if that thee list.
I have gold and silver lying in my chist;
If that thee hap to come in to our shire
Al shal be thin, right as thou wolt desire.

Grand mercy, quod this Sompnour, by my faith.
Everich in others hond his trouthe laith 6986
For to be sworne brethren til they dey.
In daliaunce they riden forth and pley.

This Sompnour, which that was as ful of jangles
As ful of venime ben thise wariangles, 6990

¶ 6990. *wariangles*] I have nothing to say either in refutation or support of Mr. Speght's explanation of this word—
"A kind of birds full of noise, and very ravenous, preying upon others, which when they have taken they use to hang upon a thorne or pricke, and teare them in peeces, and de-

And ever enquering upon every thing,
 Brother, quod he, wher is now your dwelling,
 Another day if that I shuld you seche?

This yeman him answerd in softe speche,
 Brother, quod he, fer in the north contree, 699;
 Wheras I hope somtime I shal thee see.
 Or we depart I shal thee so wel wisse,
 That of min hous ne shalt thou never misse.

Now brother, quod this Sompneur, I you pray
 Teche me, while that we riden by the way, 7000
 (Sith that ye ben a bailif as am I)
 Som subtiltee, and tell me faithfully
 In min office how I may moste winne;
 And spareth not for conscience or for sinne,
 But as my brother tell me how do ye. 7005

Now by my trouthe, brother min, said he,
 As I shal tellen thee a faithful Tale.
 My wages ben ful streit and eke ful smale;
 My lord is hard to me and dangerous,
 And min office is ful laborious, 7010
 And therfore by extortion I leve;
 Forsoth I take all that men wol me yeve:
 Al gates by sleighte or by violence
 Fro yere to yere I win all my dispence:

"vour them; and the common opinion is that the thorne
 "whereupon they thus fasten them and eat them is afterward
 "poisonfome. In Staffordshire and Shropshire the name is com-
 "mon"—except that Cotgrave, in his *Fr. Dict.* explains *ar-*
neat to signify the ravenous bird called a *strike*, *nyumurder*,
wariangle. See *Gloss.* in v. *Wariangles*.

I can no better tellen faithfully.

7015

Now certes (quod this Sompnour) so fare I;

I spare not to taken, God it wote,

But if it be to hevy or to hote.

What I may gete in conseil prively

No maner conscience of that have I.

7020

N'ere min extortion I might not liven,

Ne of swiche japes wol I not be shriven.

Stomak ne conscience know I non;

I shrew thise shrifte faders everich on:

Wel be we met by God and by Seint Jame.

7025

But, leve brother, tell me than thy name,

Quod this Sompnour. Right in this mene while

This yeman gan a litel for to smile.

Brother, quod he, wolt thou that I thee tell?

I am a fend, my dwelling is in hell,

7030

And here I ride about my pourchasing

To wote wher men wol give me any thing:

My pourchas is th' effect of all my rent,

Loke how thou ridest for the same entent:

To winnen good thou rekkest never how:

7035

Right so fare I, for riden wol I now

Unto the worldes ende for a praye.

A. quod this Sompnour, *benedicite!* what say ye?

I wend ye were a yeman trewely,

Ye have a mannes shape as wel as I:

7040

¶ 7018. *to hevy or to hote*] We have nearly the same expression in *Freightart*, v. i. c. 229; "ne laissoient riens à prendre, "s'il n'estoit trop chaud, trop froid, ou trop pesant."

F iiij

Have ye than a figure determinat
In helle, ther ye ben in your estat?

Nay certainly, quod he, ther have we non,
But whan us liketh we can take us on,
Or elles make you wene that we ben shape 7045
Somtime like a man, or like an ape,
Or like an angel can I ride or go;
It is no wonder thing though it be so;
A lousy jogelour can deceiven thee,
And parde yet can I more craft than he. 7050

Why, quod the Sompnour, ride ye than or gon
In fondry shape, and not alway in on?

For we, quod he, wol us swiche forme make
As most is able our preye for to take.

What maketh you to han al this labour? 7055

Ful many a cause, leve Sire Sompnour,
Saide this fend. But alle thing hath time;
The day is short, and it is passed prime,
And yet ne wan I nothing in this day;
I wol entend to winning if I may, 7060
And not entend our thinges to declare;
For, brother min, thy wit is al to bare
To understand, although I told hem thee.
But for thou axest why labouren we?
For somtime we be Goddes instruments, 7065
And menes to don his commandements,
Whan that him list, upon his creatures,
In divers actes and in divers figures:

Withouten him we have no might certain,
If that him list to stonden theragain. 7070

And som time at our praiere han we leve
Only the body and not the foule to greve;

Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo,
And somtime han we might on bothe two,

This is to sain, on foule and body eke : 7075
And somtime be we suffered for to seke

Upon a man, and don his foule unreste
And not his body, and all is for the beste.

Whan he withstandeth our temptation
It is a cause of his salvation, 7080

Al be it that it was not our entente
He shuld be sauf, but that we wold him hente.

And somtime be we servants unto man,
As to the Archebischop Seint Dunstan,

And to the apostle servant eke was I. 7085
Yet tell me, quod this Sompnour, faithfully,

Make ye you newe bodies thus alway
Of elements? The fend answered Nay.

Somtime we seine, and somtime we arise
With ded bodies, in ful sondry wise, 7090

And speke as renably, and faire, and wel,
As to the Phitonesse did Samuel;

¶ 7092. *As to the Phitonesse did Samuel*] So mss. A.; the
editt. read,

As the Phitonesse did to Samuel—
which is certainly wrong. See 1 Sam. xxviii. Our Author uses
Phitonesse for *Pythonesse*, H. F. iii. 171; and so does Gower,
Conf. Amant. fol. 140;

The *Phitonesse* in Samary.—

And yet wol som men say it was not he:
 I do no force of your divinitee.
 But o thing warne I thee, I wol not jape, 7095
 Thou wolt algates wete how we be shape:
 Thou shalt hereafterward, my brother dere,
 Come wher thee nedeth not of me to lere,
 For thou shalt by thin owen experience
 Conne in a chaire rede of this sentence 7100
 Bet than Virgile, while he was on live,
 Or Dant also. Now let us riden blive,
 For I wol holden compaignie with thee
 Til it be so that thou forsake me.

Nay, quod this Sompnour, that shal never betide.
 I am yeman knowen is ful wide; 7106
 My trouthe wol I hold, as in this cas;
 For though thou were the devil Sathanas,
 My trouthe wol I hold to thee, my brother,
 As I have sworne, and eche of us to oþer, 7110
 For to be trewe brethren in this cas,
 And bothe we gon abouten our purchas.
 Take thou thy part, what that men wol thee yeve,
 And I shal min, thus may we bothe leve;
 And if that any of us have more than oþer 7115
 Let him be trewe, and part it with his brother.

I graunte, quod the devil, by my fay.
 And with that word they riden forth hir way,
 And right at entring of the tounes ende
 To which this Sompnour shope him for to wende

They saw a cart that charged was with hay, 7121
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.

Depe was the way, for which the carte stood;
The carter smote, and cried as he were wood,
Heit Scot, heit Brok; what, spare ye for the stones?
The fend (quod he) you secche body and bones, 7126
As ferforthly as ever ye were soled,
So mochel wo as I have with you tholed.

The devil have al, bothe hors, and cart, and hay.

The Sompnour sayde, Here shal we have a pray;
And nere the fend he drow, as nought newere, 7131
Ful prively, and rouned in his ere,

Herken my brother, herken, by thy faith;
Hereft thou not how that the carter saith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee, 7135
Both hay and cart, and eke his caples three.

Nay, quod the devil, God wot never a del;
It is not his entente, trust thou me wel:
Axe him thyself, if thou not trowest me,
Or elles stint a while and thou shalt see. 7140

This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they begonne to drawen and to fleupe.
Heit now, quod he; ther, Jesu Crist you blesse,
And all his hondes werk bothe more and lesse!
That was wel twight, min owen Liard boy, 7145
I pray God save thy body and Seint Eloy.

v. 7145. *Liard*] A common appellative for a horse, from its grey colour, as *Bayard* was from *bay*. [See before, ver. 4113.] P. P. fol. 92;

He lyght downe of *Liarde* and ladde him in his hand.

Now is my cart out of the slough parde.

Lo, brother, quod the fend, what told I thee?
 Here may ye seen, min owen dere brother,
 The cherl spake o thing but he thought another.
 Let us go forth abouten our viage; 7151
 Here win I nothing upon this cariage.

Whan that they comen somwhat out of toun
 This Sompnour to his brother gan to rounne;
 Brother, quod he, here woneth an old rebekke 7155
 That had almost as lefe to lefe hire nekke
 As for to yeve a peny of hire good.

I wol have twelf pens though that she be wood,
 Or I wol somone hire to our office,
 And yet, God wot, of hire know I no vice; 7160
 But for thou canst not as in this contree
 Winnen thy cost, take here ensample of me.

This Sompnour clappeth at the widewes gate;
 Come out, he sayd, thou olde very trate;
 I trow thou hast som frere or preest with thee. 7165

Who clappeth? said this wif, *benedicite!*
 God save you, Sire, what is your swete will?

I have, quod he, of somons here a bill:
 Up peine of cursing loke that thou be
 To-morwe before the archedekenes knee, 7170

Bishop Douglas, in his Virgil, usually puts *liart* for *albus*, *incanus*, &c.

☆. 7164. *thou olde very trate*] So mss. C. 1, A. 1, 2, and ed. Ca. 2. The later editt. read *viritrats*, in one word. We may suppose *trate* to be used for *trot*, a common term for an old woman. Keyser [*Antiq. Sept.* p. 503.] refers it to the same original with the German *drud* or *drut*, *saga*.

To answere to the court of certain thinges.

Now Lord, quod she, Crist Jesu, King of kinges,
So willy helpe me as I ne may:

I have ben sike, and that ful many a day:

I may not go so fer (quod she) ne ride 7175

But I be ded, so priketh it in my side.

May I not axe a libel, Sire Sompnour,

And answere ther by my procuratour

To swiche thing as men wold apposen me?

Yes, quod this Sompnour, pay anon, let see, 7180

Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquite:

I shal no profit han therby but lite;

My maister hath the profit and not I.

Come of, and let me riden hastily;

Yeve me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie. 7185

Twelf pens! quod she; now Lady Seint Marie

So willy helpe me out of care and sinne,

This wide world though that I shuld it winne,

Ne have I not twelf pens within my hold.

Ye knowen wel that I am poure and old; 7190

Kithe your almesse upon me poure wretche.

Nay than, quod he, the foule fend me fetche

If I thee excuse, though thou shuldest be spilt.

Alas! quod she, God wot I have no gilt.

Pay me, quod he, or by the swete Seinte Anne

As I wol bere away thy newe panne 7196

For dette which thou owest me of old

Whan that thou madest thyn husbond cokewold

I paied at home for thy correction.

Thou liest, quod she, by my salvation; 7200
Ne was I never or now, widew ne wif,
Sompnaed unto your court in all my lif,
Ne never I n'as but of my body trewe.
Unto the devil rough and blake of hewe
Yeve I thy body and my panne also. 7205

And whan the devil herd hire cursen so
Upon hire knees, he sayd in this manere ;
Now Mabily, min moder dere,
Is this your will in earnest that ye sey ?

The devil, quod she, so fetch him or he dey, 7210
And panne and all, but he wol him repent.

Nay, olde stot, that is not min entent,
Quod this Sompnour, for to repenten me
For any thing that I have had of thee :
I wold I had thy smok and every cloth. 7215

Now brother, quod the devil, be not wroth ;
Thy body and this panne ben min by right :
Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Wher thou shalt knowen of our privetee
More than a maister of divinitee. 7220

And with that word the foule fend him hent
Body and soule : he with the devil went
Wher as thise Sompnours han hir heritage :
And God, that maketh after his image
Mankinde, save and gide us all and some, 7225
And lene this Sompnour good man to become.

Lordings, I coude have told you (quod this Frere)
 Had I had leiser for this Sompnour here,
 After the text of Crist, and Poule, and John,
 And of oure other doctours many on, 7230
 Swiche peines that your hertes might agrise,
 Al be it so that no tonge may devise,
 Though that I might a thousand winter tell,
 The peines of thilke cursed hous of hell :
 But for to kepe us fro that cursed place 7235
 Waketh and prayeth Jesu of his grace
 So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
 Herkneeth this word, beware as in this cas ;
 The leon sit in his awaite alway
 To sle the innocent if that he may. 7240
 Disposeth ay your hertes to withstond
 The fend, that you wold maken thral and bond ;
 He may not tempten you over your might,
 For Crist wol be your champion and your knight ;
 And prayeth that this Sompnour him repent
 Of his misdeds or that the fend him hent. 7246

THE SOMPNOURES PROLOGUE.

This Sompnour in his stirops high he stood ;
 Upon this Frere his herte was so wood,
 That like an aspen leef he quoke for ire.
 Lordings, quod he, but o thing I desire ; 7250
 Iyou beseche that of your curtesie,
 Sin ye han herd this false Frere lie,

As suffereth me I may my Tale telle.

This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,
And God it wot that is but litel wonder; 7255
Freres and fendes ben but litel asonder.

For parde ye han often time herd telle
How that a frere ravished was to helle
In spirit ones by a visioun,
And as an angel lad him up and down, 7260
To shewen him the peines that ther were,
In all the place saw he not a frere;
Of other folk he saw ynow in wo.

Unto this angel spake the frere tho;
Now Sire, quod he, han freres swiche a grace 7265
That non of hem shal comen in this place?

Yes, quod this angel, many a millioun;
And unto Sathanas he lad him down.
(And now hath Sathanas, saith he, a tayl
Broder than of a carrike is the sayl) 7270

Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas, quod he,
Shew forth thin ers, and let the frere see
Wher is the nest of freres in this place.
And er than half a furlong way of space,
Right so as bees out swarmen of an hive, 7275
Out of the devils ers ther gonnen drive
A twenty thousand freres on a route,
And thurghout hell they swarmed al aboute,

ψ. 7269. (*And now hath Sathanas, saith he*] So mss. C. 1, A. 1. 1, 2. I have put these two lines in a parenthesis, as be refers to the narrator, the Sompnour.

ψ. 7277. *A twenty thousand*] I have added *A* for the sake of

And com agen, as fast as they may gon,
 And in his ers they crepen everich on : 7280
 He clapt his tayl agen, and lay ful still.

This frere, whan he loked had his fill
 Upon the turments of this fory place,
 His spirit God restored of his grace
 Into his body agen, and he awoke ; 7285
 But natheles for fere yet he quoke,
 So was the devils ers ay in his mind,
 That is his heritage of veray kind.

God save you alle save this cursed Frere ;
 My Prologue wol I end in this manere. 7290

THE SOMPNOURES TALE.

LORDINGS, there is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,
 A merish contree ycalled Holderneffe,
 In which ther went a limitour aboute,
 To preche and eke to beg it is no doute. 7270
 And so befell that on a day this frere
 Had preched at a chirche in his manere, 7295
 And specially aboven every thing
 Excited he the peple in his preching

the verse. Chaucer frequently prefixes it to nouns of number.
 See ver. 10697 ;

And up they risen, wel a ten or twelve.

The Sompnours Tale] A begging friar coming to a farmer's
 house who lay sick, obtaineth of the sick man a certain legacy
 which must be equally divided among his convent. A requital
 to the friar, shewing their cozenage, loitering, impudent beg-
 ging, and hypocritical praying.

To trentals, and to yeve, for Goddes sake,
 Wherwith men mighten holy houses make, 7300
 Ther as divine service is honoured,
 Not ther as it is wasted and devoured,
 Ne ther it nedeth not for to be yeven,
 As to possicfioners, that mowen leven
 (Thanked be God) in wele and abundance. 7305
 Trentals, sayd he, deliveren fro penance
 Hir frendes soules as wel olde as yonge,
 Ye, whan that they ben hastily ysonge,
 Not for to hold a preest jolif and gay,
 He singeth not but o masse on a day. 7310
 Delivereth out (quod he) anon the soules.
 Ful hard it is with flesshook or with oules
 To ben yclawed, or to bren or bake.
 Now spede you hastily for Cristes sake.

And whan this frere had said all his entent, 7315
 With *qui cum patri* forth his way he went.
 Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem lest
 He went his way, no lenger wold he rest.
 With scrippe and tipped staf, ytucked hie,
 In every hous he gan to pore and prie, 7320
 And begged mele and chese, or elles corn.
 His felaw had a staf tipped with horn,
 A pair of tables all of ivory,
 And a pointel ypolished fetisly,

ψ. 7299. *To trentals*] *Un trentel*, Fr. was a service of thirty masses, which were usually celebrated upon as many different days, for the dead, *Du Cange*, in v. *Trentals*.

And wrote alway the names, as he flood, 7325
 Of alle folk that yave hem any good,
 Askaunce that he wolde for hem preye.
 Yeve us a bushel whete, or malt or reye,
 A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of chese,
 Or elles what you list, we may not chese; 7330

¶ 7327. *Askaunce that he wolde for hem preye*] The Glossary interprets *askaunce* to mean askew, aside, sideways, in a side view, upon what authority I know not. It will be better to examine the other passages in which the same word occurs before we determine the sense of it. See ver. 16306;

Askaunce that craft is so light to lere.
Tro. i. 285;

7310 *Askaunce*, lo! is this not wisely spoken?
Ibid. 292;

Askaunce, what! may I not stonden here?
Lydg. Trag. fol. 136, b.;

Askaunce I am of maners most chaungeable.
 In the first and last instance, as well as in the text, *askaunce* seems to signify simply *as if*, *quasi*; in the two others it signifies a little more, *as if to say*. This latter signification may be clearly established from the third line, which in the Italian original [*Philosofrato di Boccaccio*, l. i.] stands thus;

Quasi dicessi, e no ci si po fare!

So that *askaunce* is there equivalent to *quasi dicessi* in Italian.—
 As to the etymology of this word, I must confess myself more at a loss. I observe however that one of a similar form, in the Teut. has a similar signification. *Als-kacks*, *quasi*, *quasi vero*, Kilian. Our *as* is the same with *als*, Teut. and Sax.; it is only a further corruption of *al so*. Perhaps therefore *askaunce* may have been originally *als-kanst*. *Kanst*, in Teut. is *chance*, Fr. and Eng.—
 I will just add that this very rare phrase was also used, as I suspect, by the author of The Continuation of The Canterbury Tales, first printed by Mr. Urry. *Prol.* ver. 361;

And al *askaunce* the loved him wel, the toke him by the swere.
 It is printed a *staunce*.

¶ 7329. *A Goddes kichel*] “It was called *A Goddes kichel*,

A Goddes halspeny, or a masse peny,
 Or yeve us of your braun, if ye have any,
 A dagon of your blanket, leve Dame,
 Our suster dere, (lo, here i write your name)
 Bacon or beef, or swiche thing as ye find. 7335

A sturdy harlot went hem ay behind,
 That was her hostes man, and bare a sakke,
 And what men yave hem laid it on his bakke.
 And whan that he was out at dore anon
 He planed away the names everich on 7340
 That he before had written in his tables:
 He served hem with nifies and with fables.

Nay, ther thoulicst, thou Sompnour, quod the Frere.
 Pees, quod our Hoste, for Cristes moder dere
 Tell forth thy Tale, and spare it not at all. 7345

So thrive i, quod this Sompnour, so i shall.

So long he went fro hous to hous, til he
 Came to an hous ther he was wont to be
 Refreshed more than in a hundred places.
 Sike lay the husband man whos that the place is;

“because godfathers and godmothers used commonly to give
 “one of them to their godchildren when they asked blessing,” *Sp.* And so we are to suppose a *Goddes halspeny*, in ver.
 7331, was called for the same reason, &c. But this is all *quod*
distum I believe. The phrase is French, and the true mean-
 ing of it is explained by M. de la Monnoye in a note upon the
Contes de B. D. Periers, t. ii. p. 107, *Belle ferrure de Dieu*; “Ex-
 “pression du petit peuple, qui raporte pieusement tout à Dieu.
 “—Rien n’est plus commun dans la bouche des bonnes vieilles,
 “que ces espèces d’Hebraïsmes: Il m’en coute un bel ecu de
 “Dieu; si ne me reste que ce pauvre enfant de Dieu; Donc
 “moi une benite aumône de Dieu.”

Bedred upon a couche low he lay. 7351

Deus hic, quod he; O Thomas! frend, good day,
Sayde this frere all curtisly and soft.

Thomas, quod he, God yelde it you, ful oft

Have I upon this benche faren ful wele, 7355

Here have I eten many a mery mele.

And fro the benche he drove away the cat,

And laied adoun his potent and his hat,

And eke his scrip, and set himself adoun:

His felaw was ywalked into toun, 7360

Forth with with his knave, into that hostelrye

Wher as he shope him thilke night to lie.

O dere maister! quod this like man,
How have ye faren sin that March began?

I saw you not this fourtene night and more. 7365

God wot, quod he, laboured have I ful sore,
And specially for thy salvation

Have I sayd many a precious orison,

And for our other frendes God hem blesse.

I have this day ben at your chirche at messe, 7370

And said a sermon to my simple wit,

Not all after the text of holy writ,

For it is hard to you as I suppose,

And therefore wol I teche you ay the glose.

Glosing is a ful glorious thing certain, 7375

For letter sleth, so as we clerkes fain;

Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,

And spend hir good ther it is reasonable;

And ther I saw our dame; a! wher is she?

Yonder, I trow that in the yard she be, 7380
Sayde this man, and she wol come anon.

Ey maister, welcome be ye by Seint John,
Sayde this wif; how fare ye hertily?

This frere ariseth up ful curtisly,
And hire embraceth in his armes narwe, 7385
And kisseth hire swete, and chirketh as a sparwe
With his lippes. Dame, quod he, right wel,
As he that is your servant every del.

Thanked be God that you yaf foule and lif
Yet saw I not this day so faire a wif 7390
In all the chirche, God so save me.

Ye God amende defautes, Sire. quod she,
Algates welcome be ye, by my fay.

Grand mercy, Dame, that have I found alway.
But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve, 7395
I wolde pray you that ye not you greve
I wol with Thomas speke a litel throw,
Thise curates ben so negligent and slow
To gropen tendrely a conscience.

In shrift, in preching, is my diligence 7400
And study, in Peters wordes and in Poules;
I walke and fishe Cristen mennes soules,
To yeld our Lord Jesu his propre rent;
To sprede his word is sette all min entent.

Now by your faith, o dere Sire! quod she, 7405
Chideth him wel for Seinte Charitee:

He is ay angry as is a pissemire
 Though that he have all that he can desire;
 Though I him wrie a-night, and make him warm,
 And over him lay my leg and eke min arm, 7410
 He groneth as our bore lith in our stie:
 Other disport of him right non have I;
 I may not plesse him in no maner cas.

O Thomas, *jeo vous die*, Thomas, Thomas!
 This maketh the fend, this muste ben amended. 7415
 Ire is a thing that high God hath defended,
 And therof wol I speke a word or two.

Now maister, quod the wif, er that I go,
 What wol ye dine? I wol go therabout.

Now Dame, quod he, *jeo vous die sanz doute*, 7420
 Have I not of a capon but the liver,
 And of your white bred nat but a shiver,
 And after that a roasted pigges hed,
 (But I ne wolde for me no beest were ded)

Than had I with you homly sustenance; 7425
 I am a man of little sustenance:

My spirit hath his fostering in the Bible:

My body is ay so ready and so penible
 To waken that my stomak is destroyed.

I pray you, Dame, that ye be nought annoied 7430

Though I so frendly you my conseil shewe;
 By God I n'old have told it but a few.

Now Sire, quod she, but o word er I go.
 My child is ded within thise wekes two,

Sone after that ye went out of this toun. 7435

His deth saw I by revelatioun,
 Sayde this frere, at home in our dortour.
 I dare wel sain that er than half an hour
 After his deth I saw him borne to blisse
 In min avision, so God me wisse; 7440

So did our sextein and our fermerere,
 That han ben trewe freres fifty yere;
 They may now, God be thanked of his lone,
 Maken hir jubilee, and walke alone.

And up I arose, and all our covent eke, 7445

With many a tere trilling on our cheke,
 Withouten noise or clatering of belles,
Te deum was our song, and nothing elles,
 Save that to Crist I bade an orison,
 Thanking him of my revelation. 7450

For, Sire and Dante, trusteth me right wel
 Our orisons ben more effectuel,

And more we seep of Cristes secree thinges,
 Than borel folk, although that they be kinges.

We live in poverté and in abstinence, 7455

And borel folk in richesse and dispence
 Of mete and drinke, and in hir foule delit :

We han this worldes lust all in despit.

v. 7442. *fifty yere*] See Du Cange, in v. *Sempellæ*. Peculiar honours and immunities were granted by the rule of St. Benedict to those monks "qui quin quaginta annos in ordine exegerant, quos annum jubileum exegisse vulgo dicimus." It is probable that some similar regulation obtained in the other orders.

7435 Lazar and Dives lividen diversely,
And divers guerdon hadden they therby. 7460
Who so wol pray he must fast and be clene,
And fat his soule and make his body lene.

We fare as sayth the apostle; cloth and food
7440 Sufficeth us though they be not ful good.
The cleneneſſe and the fasting of us freres 7465
Maketh that Crist accepteth our praieres.

Lo, Moises forty daies and forty night
Fasted er that the high God ful of might
7445 Spake with him in the mountagne of Sinay :
With empty wombe of fasting many a day 7470

Received he the lawe that was writen
With Goddes finger: and Eli, wel ye witen,
In Mount Oreb, er he had any speche
7450 With highe God, that is our lives leche,
He fasted long, and was in contemplance. 7475

Aaron, that had the temple in governance,
And eke the other preestes everich on,
Into the temple whan they shulden gon
To praien for the peple, and do servise,
7455 They n'olden drinken in no maner wise 7480

No drinke which that might hem drunken make,
But ther in abstinence pray and wake
Lest that they deiden. Take heed what I say—

But they be sobre that for the peple pray—
Ware that I say—No more; for it sufficeth. 7485
Our Lord Jesu, as holy writ deviseth,

Yave us ensample of fasting and praieres;
 Therfore we mendiants, we sely freres,
 Ben wedded to poverte and continence,
 To charitee, humbleste, and abstinence, 7490
 To persecution for rightwisnesse,
 To weping, misericorde, and to clenenesse;
 And therfore may ye see that our praieres
 (I speke of us, we mendiants, we freres)
 Ben to the highe God more acceptable 7495
 Than youres, with your festes at your table.

Fro Paradis first, if I shal not lie,
 Was man out chafed-for his glotonie;
 And chast was man in Paradis certain.
 But herken now, I thomas, what I shal sain : 7500
 I have no text of it as I suppose,
 But I shal find it in a maner glose;
 That specially our swete Lord Jesus
 Spake this by freres whan he sayde thus,
 Blessed be they that poure in spirit ben; 7505
 And so forth all the gosepl may ye sen
 Whether it be liker our profession
 Or hirs that swimmen in possession.
 Fic on hir pompe, and on hir glotonie,
 And on hir lewednesse! I hem desie. 7510

v. 7488. *mendians*] In ms. *A.* it is *mendinants*, both here
 and below, ver. 7494, which reading, though not agreeable to
 analogy, is perhaps the true one, as I find the word constantly
 so spelled in the Stat. 12 R. II. c. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Me thinketh they ben like Jovinian,
 Fat as a whale, and walken as a swan;
 Al vinolent as botel in the spence;
 Hir praier is of ful gret reverence:
 Whan they for foules say the Psalm of Davit, 7515
 Lo, bus they say, *Cor meum exultavit*.

Who soloweth Cristes gospel and his lore
 But we, that humble ben, and chast and pore,
 Workers of Goddes word, not auditours?
 Therefore right as an hauke upon a sours 7520
 Up springeth into the aire, right so praieres
 Of charitable and chast besy freres
 Maken hir sours to Goddes eres two.

Thomas, Thomas! so mote I ride or go,
 And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive, 7525
 N'ere thou our broder shuldest thou not thrive.
 In our chapitre pray we day and night
 To Crist that he thee sende hele and might

¶ 7511. *Jovinian*] Against whom St. Jerome wrote, or perhaps the supposed emperor of that name in the *Gesta Romanorum*, c. lix, whose story was worked up into a morality, under the title of *L'orgueil et présomption de l'Empereur Jovinian*--- à 19 personages. It was printed at Lyons 1581, 8vo, sur une vieille copie. Du Verdier, in v. *Jovinian*.—The same story is told of a Robert King of Sicily, in an old English poem, ms. Harl. 1701. Mr. Warton has given large extracts from an Oxford ms. as I suppose, of the same poem, *Hist. of Eng. Po.* p. 184.

¶ 7514. *of ful gret reverence*] The editt. have changed this to *ful lital*; but the reading of the ms. may stand, if it be understood ironically.

Volume III.

H

both here
 agreeable to
 d constantly

Thy body for to welden hastily.

God wot, quod he, nothing therof sele I. 7530
 As help me Crist, as I in fewe yeres
 Have spended upon divers maner freres
 Ful many a pound, yet fare I never the bet;
 Certain my good have I almost beset:
 Farewel my good, for it is al ago. 7535

The frere answered, O Thomas! dest thou so?
 What nedeth you diverse freres to seche?
 What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche
 To sechen other leches in the toun?
 Your inconstance is your confusion. 7540
 Hold ye than me, or elles our covent,
 To pray for you ben insufficient?
 Thomas, that jape n'is not worth a mite;
 Your maladie is for we han to lite.
 A! yeve that covent half a quarter otes, 7545
 And yeve that covent four-and-twenty grotes,
 And yeve that frere a peny and let him go:
 Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thing be so.
 What is a ferthing worth parted on twelve?
 Lo, eche thing that is oned in himselve 7550
 Is more strong than whan it is yscatered.
 Thomas, of me thou shalt not ben yslatered,
 Thou woldest han our labour al for nought.
 The highe God, that all this world hath wrought,
 Saith that the workman worthy is his hire. 7555
 Thomas, nought of your trefor i desire

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As for myself, but that all our covent
 To pray for you is ay so diligent,
 And for to bidden Cristes owen chirche.
 Thomas, if ye wol lerne for to wirche, 7560
 Of bilding up of chirches may ye finde
 If it be good in Thomas lif of Inde.

Ye lissen here ful of anger and of ire,
 With which the devil set your herte on fire,
 And chiden here this holy innocent, 7565
 Your wif, that is so good and patient;
 And therfore trow me, Thomas, if thee lest,
 Ne strive not with thy wif, as for the best.
 And bere this word away now by thy faith,
 Touching swiche thing, lo, what the wise saith: 7570

Within thy hous ne be thou no leon,
 To thy suggets do non oppressioun,
 Ne make thou not thin acquaintance to flee. 7545

And yet, Thomas, eftsones charge I thee
 Beware from ire that in thy bosom slepeth; 7575
 Ware fro the serpent that so slily crepeth
 Under the gras, and stingeth subtilly:
 Beware, my sone, and herken patiently
 That twenty thousand men han lost hir lives
 For striving with hir lemmans and hir wives. 7580

Now sith ye han so holy and meek a wif,
 What nedeth you, Thomas, to maken strif?

Ther n'is ywis no serpent so cruel,
 Whan man tredeth on his tail, ne half so fel,

As woman is whan she hath caught an ire; 7585
 Veray vengeance is than all hire desire.

Ire is a sinne on of the grete seven,
 Abhominable unto the God of heven,
 And to himself it is destruction :
 This every lewed vicar and person 7590
 Can say how ire engendreth homicide :
 Ire is in soth executeur of pride.

I coud of ire say so mochel sorwe
 My Tale shulde lasten til to-morwe ;
 And therfore pray I God both day and night 7595
 An irous man God fend him litel might.
 It is gret harm, and certes gret pitee,
 To sette an irous man in high degree.

Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
 As saith Senek, that during his estat 7600
 Upon a day out riden knightes two;
 And, as Fortune wold that it were so,
 That on of hem came home, that other nought.
 Anon the knight before the juge is brought,
 That saide thus; Thou hast thy felaw slain, 7605
 For which I deme thee to the deth certain.
 And to another knight commanded he,
 Go, lede him to the deth, I charge thee.
 And happed as they wenten by the wey
 Toward the place ther as he shulde dey, 7610

¶ 7600. *As saith Senek*] This story is told by *Seneca, de ira*,
 l. i. c. xvi, of Cn. Piso. It is also told of an emperor *Eraculus*
Gesta Romanorum, cap. cxi.

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 c. xiv. : it

The knight came which men wenden had be ded:
 Than thoughten they it was the beste rede
 To lede hem bothe to the juge again.
 They saiden, Lord, the knight ne hath not slain
 His felaw, here he stondeth hol alive. 7615

Ye shall be ded, quod he, so mot I thrive,
 That is to say, both on, and two, and three.
 And to the firste knight right thus spake he.

I damned thee, thou must algate be ded;
 And thou also must nedes lese thyn hed, 7620
 For thou art cause why thy felaw deyeth;
 And to the thridde knight right thus he seyeth,
 Thou hast not don that I commanded thee.
 And thus he did do fien hem alle three.

Irous Cambises was eke dronkelew, 7625
 And ay delighted him to ben a shrew:
 And so befell a lord of his meinie,
 That loved vertuous moralitee,
 Sayd on a day betwix hem two right thus;
 A lord is lost if he be vicious; 7630

And dronkenesse is eke a foule record
 Of any man, and namely of a lord.
 Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
 Awaiting on a lord, and he n'ot wher.
 For Goddes love drink more attemprely: 7635
 Win maketh man to lesen wretchedly

¶ 7625. *Irous Cambises*] This story is also in *Seneca*, l. iii.
 c. xiv.: it differs a little from one in *Herodotus*, l. iii.

His mind, and eke his limmes everich on.
 The revers shalt thou see, quod he, anon,
 And preve it by thyn owen experience
 That win ne doth to folk no swiche offence. 7640
 Ther is no win bereveth me my might
 Of hond, ne foot, ne of min eyen sight.
 And for despit he dranke mochel more
 An hundred part than he had don before,
 And right anon this cursed irous wretche 7645
 This knightes sone let before him fetchen,
 Commanding him he shuld before him stond;
 And sodenly he took his bow in hond,
 And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
 And with an arwe he slow the child right ther. 7650
 Now whether have I a liker hond or non?
 Quod he; is all my might and minde agon?
 Hath win bereved me min eyen sight?
 What shuld I tell the answer of the knight?
 His son was slain, ther is no more to say. 7655
 Beth ware therfore with lordes for to play,
 Singeth Placebo, and I shal if I can,
 But if it be unto a poure man:
 To a poure man men shuld his vices telle,
 But not to a lord, though he shuld go to helle. 7660

v. 7657. *Singeth Placebo*] The allusion is to an anthem in the Romish church from *Psalm* cxvi. 9, which in the Vulgate stands thus; *Placebo Domino in regione vivorum*. Hence the complacent brother in *The Merchant's Tale* is called *Placebo*.

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Lo, irous Cirus, thilke Persien,
 How he destroyed the river of Gisen,
 For that an hors of his was dreint therin
 Whan that he wente Babilen to win :
 He made that the river was so smal 7665
 That wimmen might it waden over al.
 Lo, what, said he, that so wel techen can ?
 Ne be no felaw to non irous man,
 Ne with no wood man walke by the way,
 Lest thee repent : I wol no forther say. 7670

Now Thomas, leve brother, leve thin ire,
 Thou shalt me find as just as is a squire :
 Hold not the devils knif ay to thin herte,
 Thin anger doth thee all to fore smerte ;
 But shew to me all thy confession. 7675

Nay, quod the like man, by Seint Simon
 I have ben siriven this day of my curat ;
 I have him told al holly min estat.
 Nedeeth no mo to speke of it, sayth he,
 But if me list of min humilitee. 7680

Yeve me than of thy gold to make our cloistre,
 Quod he, for many a muscle and many an oistre,

v. 7662. *the river of Gisen*] It is called *Gynates* in *Seneca*, lib. ot. c. xxi, and in *Herodotus*, l. i.

v. 7666. *That wimmen*] So the best msf. agreeably to the authors just quoted. The edit. have —

That men might ride and wade, &c.

See J. Mandeville tells the story of the Euphrates—"Because that he had sworn that he sholde putte the ryvere in suche poynt that a woman myghte wel passe there withouten carynge of of hire clothes," p. 49.

Whan other men han ben ful wel at ese,
 Hath been our food, our cloistre for to rese;
 And yet, God wot, unnethe the fundament 7683
 Parfourmed is, ne of our pavement
 N'is not a tile yet within our wones:
 By God we owen fourty pound for stoncs.
 Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed helle,
 For elles mote we our bokes selle, 7690
 And if ye lackeoure predication,
 Than goth this world all to destruction;
 For who so fro this world wold us bereve,
 So God me save, Thomas, by your leve
 He wold bereve out of this world the sonne; 7695
 For who can teche and worken as we conne?
 And that is not of litel time (quod he)
 But fithen Elie was and Elisee
 Han freres ben, that find I of record,
 In charitee, ythouked be our Lord. 7700
 Now Thomas, help for Seinte Charitee.
 And deun anon he sette him on his knee.
 This like man woxe wel neigh wood for ire;
 He wolde that the frere had ben a-fire
 With his false dissimulation. 7705
 Swiche thing as is in my possession,
 Quod he, that may I yeve you, and non other.
 Ye sain me thus, how that I am your brother.
 Ye certes, quod this frere, ye trusteth wel;
 I took our dame the letter of our sele. 7710

[v. 7710. *the letter of our sele*] There is a letter of this kind

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Now wel, quod he, and semwhat shal I yeve
 Unto your holy covent while I live;
 And in thin hond thou shalt it have anon,
 On this condition, and other non,
 That thou depart it so, my dere brother, 7715
 That every frere have as moche as other:
 This shalt thou swere on thy profession
 Withouten fraud or cavilation.

I swere it, quod the frere, upon my faith;
 And therwithal his hond in his he layth. 7720
 Lo here my faith; in me shal be no lak.

Than put thin hond adoun right by my bak,
 Seide this man, and grope wel behind
 Benethe my buttoke, ther thou shalte find
 A thing that I have hid in privetee. 7725
 Al thought this frere, that shal go with me;
 And doun his hond he launcheth to the cliste,
 In hope for to finden ther a giste.

And whan this like man felte this frere
 About his towel gropen ther and here, 7730
 Amid his hond he let the frere a fart:
 Ther n'is no capel drawing in a cart
 That might han let a fart of swiche a soun.

The frere up sterte as doth a wood leoun:

*in Stevens, Supp. to Dugd. vol. ii. App. p. 370; "Fratres Præ-
 "dicatores, Warwice. admittunt Thomam Cannings et uxore
 "rem ejus Agnetem ad participationem omnium honorum
 "operum conventus ejusdem." It is under seal of the Prior,
 4 Non. Octob. 41. Dom. 1347.*

A! false cherl, quod he, for Goddes bones 7735
 This hast thou in despit don for the nones :
 Thou shalt abie this fart if that I may.

His meinie, which that herden this affray,
 Came leping in, and chafed out the frere,
 And forth he goth with a ful angry chere, 7740
 And fet his felaw ther as lay his store :
 He loked as it were a wilde bore,
 And grinte with his teeth, so was he wroth.
 A sturdy pas down to the court he goth,
 Wher as ther woned a man of gret honour, 7745
 To whom that he was alway confessor :
 This worthy man was lord of that villiage.
 This frere came, as he were in a rage,
 Wher as this lord sat eting at his bord :
 Unnethes might the frere speke o word, 7750
 Til atte last he saide, God you see !

This lord gan leke, and saide, *Benedicite* !
 What ? Frere John, what maner world is this ?
 I see wel that som thing ther is amis ;
 Ye loken as the wood were ful of theves. 7755
 Sit down anon, and tell me what your greve is,

¶. 7740.] The remainder of this Tale is omitted in mss. B. G. and Bod. C. and instead of it they give us the following lame and impotent conclusion ;

He ne had nozt ellis for his sermon
 To part among his brethren when he cam home.
 And thus is this Tale idon,
 For we were almost att the toun.

I only mention this to shew what liberties some copists have taken with our Author.

And it shal ben amended if I may.

I have, quod he, had a despit to day,
 God yelde you, adoun in your village,
 That in this world ther n'is so poure a page 7760
 That he n'olde have abhominatioun
 Of that I have received in youre toun;
 And yet ne greveth me nothing so fore
 As that the olde cherl with lokkes hore
 Blasphemed hath oure holy covent eke. 7765

Now maister, quod this lord, I you beseke.

No maister, Sire, quod he, but servitour,
 Though I have had in scole that honour.
 God liketh not that men us Rabi call
 Neither in market ne in your large hall. 7770

No force, quod he, but tell me ail your grefe.

Sire, quod this frere, an odious mischefe
 This day betid is to min ordre and me,
 And so *per consequens* to eche degree
 Of holy chirche, God amende it sone. 7775

Sire, quod the lord, ye wot what is to don:
 Distempre you not, ye ben my confessour;
 Ye ben the salt of the erthe and the favour:
 For Goddes love your patience now hold;
 Telle me your grefe. And he anon him told 7780
 As ye han herd before, ye wot wel what.

The lady of the hous ay stille sat
 Til she had herde what the frere said.

Ey, Goddes moder, quod she, blisful maid!

Is ther ought elles? tell me faithfully. 7785
 Madame, quod he, how thinketh you therby?
 How that me thinketh? quod she; so God me spede
 I say a cherle hath don a cherles dede.
 What shuld I say? God let him never the;
 His like hed is ful of vanitee: 7790
 I hold him in a maner frenesie.

Madame, quod he, by God I shal not lie
 But I in other wise may ben awreke;
 I shal diffame him over all ther I speke;
 This false blasphemour, that charged me 7795
 To parten that wol not departed be
 To every man ylike, with meschance.

The lord sat stille as he were in a trance,
 And in his herte he rolled up and down
 How had this cherl imaginatioun 7800
 To shewen swiche a problemme to the frere.
 Never erst or now ne herd I swiche matere;
 I trow the devil put it in his mind.
 In all arismetrike shal ther no man find
 Beforn this day of swiche a question. 7805
 Who shulde make a demonstration
 That every man shuld han ylike his part
 As of a foun or favour of a fart?
 O nice proude cherl! I shrewe his face.

Lo, Sires, quod the lord, with harde grace, 7810
 Who ever herd of swiche a thing or now?
 To every man ylike! tell me how.

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785 It is an impossible, it may not be :
 Ey, nice cherl ! God let him never the.
 The rombling of a fart, and every soun, 7815
 N'is but of aire reverberatioun,
 And ever it waiteth lite and lite away ;
 790 Ther n'is no man can demen, by my say,
 If that it were departed equally.
 What ? lo my cherl, lo yet how shrewedly 7820
 Unto my confessour to-day he spake !
 I hold him certain a demoniake.

7795 Now ete your mete, and let the cherl go play ;
 Let him go honge himself a devil way.

Now stood the lordes squier atte bord 7825
 That carf his mete, and herde word by word
 Of all this thing of which I have you sayd.

7800 My Lord, quod he, be ye not evil apaid ;
 I coude telle for a gounne-cloth
 To you, Sire Frere, so that ye be not wroth, 7830
 How that this fart shuld even ydeled be
 Amonge your covent, if it liked thee.

7805 Tell, quod the lord, and thou shalt have anon
 A gounne-cloth, by God and by Seint John.

My Lord, quod he, whan that the weder is faire,
 Withouten winde or pertourbing of aire, 7836
 Let bring a cart-whele here into this hall,
 But loke that it have his spokes all ;
 Twelf spokes hath a cart-whele communly ;
 And bring me than twelf freres, wete ye why ? 7840

For threttene is a covent as I gesse :
 Your confessour here for his worthinesse
 Shal parfourme up the noumbre of his covent.
 Than shull they knele adoun by on assent,
 And to every spokes end in this manere 7843
 Ful sadly lay his nose shal a frere;
 Your noble confessour, ther God him save,
 Shal hold his nose upright under the nave.
 Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and tought
 As any tabour, hider ben ybrought; 7850
 And set him on the whele right of this cart
 Upon the nave, and make him let a fart,
 And ye shull seen, up peril of my lif,
 By veray preef that is demonstratif,
 That equally the soun of it wol wende, 7855
 And eke the flinke, unto the spokes ende,
 Save that this worthy man, your confessour,
 (Because he is a man of gret honour)
 Shal han the firste fruit, as reson is.
 The noble usage of freres yet it is 7860
 The worthy men of hem shul first be served,
 And certainly he hath it wel deserved;
 He hath to-day taught us so mochel good,
 With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,
 That I may vouchesauf, I say for me, 7865
 He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
 And so wold all his brethren hardely,
 He bereth him so faire and holyly.

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The lord, the lady, and eche man, save the frere,
 Sayden that Jankin spake in this matere 7870
 As wel as Euclide or elles Ptholomee.
 Touching the cherl they sayden, Subtiltee
 And highe wit made him speken as he spake;
 He n'is no fool ne no demoniake.
 And Jankin hath ywonne a newe goun.
 My Tale is don, we ben almost at toun. 7876

THE CLERKES PROLOGUE.

SIRE Clerk of Oxenforde, our Hoste said,
 Ye ride as stille and coy as doth a maid
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord;
 This day ne herd I of your tonge a word. 7880
 I trow ye studie abouten som sophime;
 But Salomon saith that every thing hath time.
 For Goddes sake as beth of better chere,
 It is no time for to studien here.
 Tell us som mery Tale by your say; 7885
 For what man that is entred in a play
 He nedes most unto the play assent.
 But precheth not, as freres don in Lent,
 To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,
 Ne that thy Tale make us not to slepe. 7890

7879. *Were newe spoused*] It has been observed in n. upon
 ver. 812, that Chaucer frequently omits the governing pro-
 noun before his verbs: the instances there cited were of personal
 pronouns. In this line, and some others which I shall point out
 here, the relatives *who* or *which* are omitted in the same man-
 ner. See ver. 7411, 13035, 16049.

Tell us som mery thing of adventures;
 Your termes, your coloures, and your figures,
 Kepe hem in store til so be ye endite
 Hie stile, as whan that men to kinges write.
 Speketh so plain at this time, I you pray,
 That we may understonden what ye say.

7895

This worthy Clerk benignely answerde;
 Hoste, quod he, I am under your yerde,
 Ye have of us as now the governance,
 And therfore wolde I do you obeyfance,
 As fer as reson asketh hardely :

7900

I wol you tell a Tale which that I
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
 As preved by his wordes and his werk :
 He is now ded and nailed in his cheste,
 I pray to God so yeve his soule reste.

7905

Fraunceis Petrark, the Laureat poete,
 Highte this clerk, whos rethorike swete
 Enlumined all itaille of poetrie,
 As Lynyan did of philosophie

7910

✧. 7910. *Lynyan*] Or *Linian*. The person meant was an eminent lawyer, and made a great noise (as we say) in his time. His name of late has been so little known that I believe nobody has been angry with the editt. for calling him *Livian*. There is some account of him in *Panzirchus, de Cl. Leg. Interpret.* l. iii. c. xxv.; "Joannes a *Lignano*, agri Mediolanensis vico, oriundus, et ob id *Lignanus* dictus," &c. One of his works, entitled *Traclatus de Bello*, is extant in ms. *Reg.* 13, B. ix. He compiled it at Bologna in the year 1360.—He was not however a mere lawyer; Chaucer speaks of him as excelling also in *philosophie*; and so does his epitaph, *op. Panzirch.* l. c.;

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Or law, or other art particulere;
 But Deth, that wol not suffre us dwellen here,
 But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
 Hem both hath flaine, and alle we shul dye.

But forth to tellen of this worthy man 7915
 That taughte me this Tale as I began,
 I say that first he with highe stile enditeth
 (Or he the body of his Tale writeth)
 A proheme, in the which descriveth he
 Piemont, and of Saluces the contree, 7920
 And speketh of Apennin the hilles hie,
 That ben the boundes of west Lumbardie,
 And of Mount Vesulus in special,
 Wher as the Poo out of a welle smal
 Taketh his firste springing and his fours, 7925
 That estward ay encrefeth in his cours
 To Emelie ward, to Ferare and Venise,
 The which a longe thing were to devise;

— — — — —
 Gloria Lignani, titulo decoratus utroque,
 Legibus et sacro Canone dives erat,
 Alter Aristoteles, Hippocras erat et Ptolomæus—

The only specimen of his philosophy that I have met with is in ms. *Harl.* 1006. It is an astrological work, entitled "Conclusiones Judicii compolite per Dominum Johannem de Lyvano (i. Lyniano) super coronacione Domini Urbani Pape VI. A. D. 1378, 18th April, &c. cum Diagrammate." He also supported the election of Urban as a lawyer, *Panzir.* l. c. et *Annal. Eccles. a Raynaldo*, tom. xvii. He must therefore have lived at least to 1378, though in the printed epitaph he is said to have died in 1368, 16th Febr.

¶ 7927. To Emelie ward] One of the regions of Italy was called Emilia, from the *Via Ænilia*, which crossed it from Pla-

And trewely, as to my jugement,
 Me thinketh it a thing impertinent, 7930
 Save that he wol conveyen his matere :
 But this is the Tale which that ye mow here.

THE CLERKES TALE.

THE^r is right at the west side of Itaille,
 Doun at the rote of Vefulus the cold,
 A lusty plain habundant of vitaille, 7935
 Ther many a toun and tour thou maist behold,
 That founded were in time of fathers old,
 And many another delitable sighte,
 And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whilom lord was of that lond, 7940
 As were his worthy elders him before,
 And obeyfant, ay redy to his hond,
 Were all his lieges bothe lesse and more :
 Thus in delit he liveth, and hath don yore,
 Beloved and drad, thurgh favour of Fortune, 7945
 Both of his lordes and of his commune.

centia to Rimini. Placentia stood upon the Po, *Pitisc. Lex. Ant. Rom. in v. Via Æmilia*. Petrarch's description of this part of the course of the Po is a little different. He speaks of it as dividing the Æmilian and Flaminian regions from Venice—"Æmiliam atque Flaminiam Venetiamque discriminans." But our Author's *Emelie* is plainly taken from him.—As the following Tale is almost wholly translated from Petrarch, [see the *Discourse*, &c. § 20,] it would be endless to cite particular passages from the original, especially as it is printed in all the editions of Petrarch's works; it is there entitled *De Obedientia et Fide Uxorii Mythologia*.

[*The Clerkes Tale*] Walter the Marquis of Saluce proveth the patience of his wife Grisild by thre most sharp trials. *Urry*.

Therwith he was, to spoken of linage,
 The gentilest yborne of Lombardie,
 A faire person, and strong, and yong of age,
 And ful of honour and of curtesie; 7950
 Discret ynough, his contree for to gie,
 Sauf in som thinges that he was to blame,
 And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considered nought
 In time coming what might him betide, 7953
 But on his lust present was all his thought,
 And for to hauke and hunt on every side;
 Wel neigh all other cures let he slide;
 And eke he n'old (and that was worst of all)
 Wedden no wif for ought that might befall. 7960

Only that point his peple bare so sore
 That flockmel on a day to him they went,
 And on of hem, that wisest was of lore,
 (Or elles that the lord wold best assent
 That he shuld tell him what the peple ment, 7963
 Or elles coud he wel shew swiche matere)
 He to the markis said as ye shull here.

O noble Markis! your humanitee
 Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
 As oft as time is of necessitee 7970
 That we to you mow tell our hevinesse;
 Accepteth, Lord, than of your gentillesse
 That we with pitous herte unto you plaine,
 And let your eres nat my vois disdain.

Al have I not to don in this matere 7975
 More than another man hath in this place,
 Yet for as moch as ye, my Lord so dere,
 Han alway shewed me favour and grace,
 I dare the better aske of you a space
 Of audience to shewen our request, 7980
 And ye, my Lord, to don right as you lest.

For certes, Lord, so wel us liketh you
 And all your werke, and ever have don, that we
 Ne couden not ourself devisen how
 We mighten live in more felicittee, 7985
 Save o thing, Lord, if it your wille be
 That for to be a wedded man you lest
 Than were your peple in soverain hertes rest.

Boweth your nekke under the blisful yok
 Of soveraintce, and not of servise, 7990
 Which that men clepen Spousaile or Wedlok:
 And thinketh, Lord, among your thoughtes wise,
 How that our dayes passe in fondry wise;
 For though we slepe, or wake, or rome, or ride,
 Ay fleth the time, it wol no man abide. 7995

And though your grene youthe floure as yet,
 In crepeth age alway as still as ston,
 And deth manafeth every age, and smit
 In eche estat, for ther escapeth non:
 And al so certain as we knowe eche on 8000
 That we shal die, as uncertain we all
 Ben of that day whan deth shal on us fall.

Accepteth than of us the trewe entent,
 That never yet refuseden your hest,
 And we wol, Lord, if that ye wol assent,
 Chese you a wise in short time at the mest
 Borne of the gentillest and of the best
 Of all this lond, so that it oughte seme
 Honour to God and you, as we can deme.

8005

Deliver us out of all this besy drede,
 And take a wif for highe Goddes sake;
 For if it so befell, as God forbede,
 That thurgh your deth your linage shulde flake,
 And that a strange successour shuld take
 Your heritage, o! wo were us on live;
 Wherfore we pray you hastily to wive.

8010

Hir meke praier and hir pitous chere
 Made the markis for to han pitee.

Ye wol, quod he, min owen peple dere,
 To that I never er thought constrainen me:
 I me rejoyced of my libertee,

8020

That selden time is found in mariage;
 Ther I was free I mosse ben in servage.

But natheles I see your trewe entent,

And trust upon your wit, and have don ay;

8025

Wherfore of my free will I wol assent

To wedden me as sone as ever I may:

But ther as ye han profred me to-day

To chesen me a wif, I you relese

That chois, and pray you of that profer cese.

8030

For God it wot that children often ben
 Unlike hir worthy eldres hem before :
 Bountee cometh al of God, not of the stren
 Of which they ben ygendred and ybore :
 I trust in Goddes bountee, and therfore
 My mariage, and min estat, and rest,
 I him betake ; he may don as him lest.

8035

Let me alone in chesing of my wif ;
 That charge upon my bak I wol endure :
 But I you pray and charge upon your lif
 That what wif that I take ye me assure
 To worship hire, while that hire lif may dure,
 In word and werk both here and elles where,
 As she an emperoures doughter were.

8040

And forthermore this shuln ye swere, that ye
 Again my chois shul never grutch ne strive ;
 For sith I shal forgo my libertee
 At your request, as ever mote I thrive
 Ther as min herte is set ther wol I wive :
 And but ye wol assent in swiche manere
 I pray you speke no more of this matere.

8050

With hertly will they sworn and assenten
 To all this thing, ther faide not o wight nay,
 Beseching him of grace, or that they wenten,
 That he wold granten hem a certain day
 Of his spoufaile as sone as ever he may,
 For yet alway the peple somewhat dred
 Lest that this markis wolde no wif wed.

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He granted hem a day, swiche as him lest,
 On which he wold be wedded likerly, 8060
 And said he did all this at hir request;
 And they with humble herte ful buxumly,
 8035 Kneling upon hir knees ful reverently,
 Him thowken all: and thus they han an end
 Of hir entente, and home agen they wend. 8065

And hereupon he to his officeres
 Commandeth for the feste to purvay,
 8040 And to his privee knightes and squieres
 Swiche charge he yave as hem list on hem lay,
 And they to his commandement obey, 8070
 And eche of hem doth al his diligence
 To do unto the feste al reverence.

Pars secunda.

Nought fer fro thiike paleis honourable,
 8045 Wher as this markis shope his mariage,
 Ther stood a thorpe, of sighte delitable, 8075
 In which that poure folk of that village
 8050 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,
 And of hir labour toke hir sustenance,
 After that the erthe yave hem habundance.

Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man 8080
 Which that was holden pourest of hem all,
 8055 But highe God somtime senden can
 His grace unto a litel oxes stall;
 Janicola men of that thorpe him call:
 A doughter had he, faire ynough to fight, 8085
 And Grisildis this yonge maiden hight.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
 Than was she on the fairest under sonne.
 Ful pourely yfostred up was she;
 No likerous lust was in hire herte yronne: 8090
 Wel ofter of the well than of the tonne
 She dranke; and for she wolde vertue plesse
 She knew wel labour but non idel ese.

But though this mayden tendre were of age,
 Yet in the brest of hire virginitee 8095
 Ther was enclosed sad and ripe corage,
 And in gret reverence and charitee
 Hire olde poure fader fostred she:
 A few sheep spinning on the feld she kept;
 She wolde not ben idel til she slept. 8100

And whan she homward came she wolde bring
 Wortes and other herbes times oft,
 The which she shred and sethe for hire living,
 And made hire bed ful hard and nothing soft;
 And ay she kept hire fadres lif on lost 8105
 With every obeisance and diligence
 That child may don to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this poure creature,
 Ful often sithe this markis sette his eye,
 As he on hunting rode paraventure;
 And whan it fell that he might hire espie 8110
 He not with wanton loking of folie
 His eyen cast on hire, but in sad wise
 Upon hire chere he wold him oft avise;

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Commending in his herte hire womanhede, 8115

And eke hire vertue, passing any wight

Of so yong age as wel in chere as dede :

For though the peple have no gret insight

In vertue, he considered ful right

Hire bountee, and disposed that he wold 8120

Wedde hire only if ever he wedden shold.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can

Tellen what woman that it shulde be,

For which marvaille wondred many a man,

And saiden, whan they were in privetee, 8125

Wol not our lord yet leve his vanitee ?

Wol he not wedde ? Alas, alas the while !

Why wol he thus himself and us begile ?

But natheles this markis hath do make

Of gemmes sette in gold and in asure 8130

Broches and ringes, for Grisildes sake ;

And of hire clothing toke he the mesure

Of a maiden like unto hire stature,

And eke of other ornamentes all

That unto swiche a wedding shulde fall. 8135

The time of underne of the same day

Approcheth that this wedding shulde be,

¶ 8136. *The time of underne*] The Glossary explains this rightly to mean the third hour of the day, or nine of the clock. Inver. 8357, where this word is used again, the original has—*bora tertia* ; in this place it has—*bora prandii* : from whence we may collect that in Chaucer's time the third hour, or *underne*, was the usual hour of dinner.—I have never met with

And all the paleis put was in array,
 Both halle and chambres, eche in his degree,
 Houses of office stuffed with plentee; 8140
 Ther mayst thou see of deinteous vitaille
 That may be found as fer as lasteth Itaille.

This real markis richely arraide,
 Lordes and ladies in his compaignie,
 The which unto the feste weren praide, 8145
 And of his retenue the bachelerie,
 With many a soun of sondry melodie,
 Unto the village of the which I told
 In this array the righte way they hold.

Grifilde of this (God wor) ful innocent 8150
 That for hire shapen was all this array,
 To fetchen water at a welle is went,
 And cometh home as sone as ever she may;
 For wel she had herd say that thilke day
 The markis shulde wedde, and if she might 8155
 She wolde fayn han seen som of that sight.

She thought I wol with other maidens stond,
 That ben my felawes, in our dore, and see
 The markisfesse, and therto wol I fond

any etymology of this word *underne*, but the following passage might lead one to suspect that it had some reference to *undernoon*. "In the town-book belonging to the corporation of Stamford, 28 E. IV. it is ordeyned that no person opyn ther sack, or set ther corn to sale, afore hour of ten of the bell, or els the *undernone* bell be rongyn." *Peck's Desid. Cur.* vol. i. b. vi. p. 36. In the *Island. Dict.* *ondverne* is rendered *Mane die*.

To don at home, as sone as it may be, 8160
 The labour which that longeth unto me,
 And than I may at leiser hire behold,
 If she this way unto the Castel hold.

And as she wolde over the threfwold gon
 The markis came and gan hire for to call, 8165
 And she set down hire water-pot anon
 Beside the threfwold in an oxes stall,
 And down upon hire knees she gan to fall,
 And with sad countenance kneleth still,
 Til she had herd what was the lordes will. 8170

This thoughtful markis spake unto this maid
 Ful soberly, and said in this manere;
 Wher is your fader, Grisildis? he said.
 And she with reverence in humble chere
 Answered, Lord, he is al redy here. 8175
 And in she goth withouten lenger lette,
 And to the markis she hire fader sette.

He by the hond than toke this poure man,
 And saide thus whan he him had aside;
 Janicola, I neither may ne can 8180
 Lenger the plesance of min herte hide;
 If that thou vouchesauf, what so betide,
 Thy doughter wol I take or that I wend
 As for my wif unto hire lives end.

Thou lovest me, that wot I wel certain, 8185
 And art my faithful liegeman ybore,
 And all that liketh me, I dare wel sain,

It liketh thee, and specially therfore
 Tell me that point that I have said before,
 If that thou wolt unto this purpos drawe, 8190
 To taken me as for thy son in lawe?

This foden cas this man astoned so
 That red he wex, abaiss, and al quaking
 He stood; unnethes said he wordes mo
 But only thus; Lord, quod he, my willing 8195
 Is as ye wol, ne ageins your liking
 I wol no thing, min owen Lord so dere;
 Right as you list governeth this matere.

Than wol I, quod this markis softely,
 That in thy chambre I, and thou, and she, 8200
 Have a collation; and wost thou why?
 For I wol ask hire if it hire wille be
 To be my wif, and reule hire after me?
 And all this shal be don in thy presence;
 I wol not speke out of thin audience. 8205

And in the chambre, while they were aboute
 The trettee, which as ye shul after here,
 The peple came into the hous withoute;
 And wondred heni in how honest manere
 Ententifly she kept hire fader dere: 8210
 But utterly Grisildis wonder might,
 For never erst ne saw she swiche a sight.

No wonder is though that she be astoned
 To see so gret a gest come in that place,
 She never was to non swiche gestes woned, 8215

For which she loked with ful pale face.
 But shortly forth this matere for to chace,
 8190 Thise arn the wordes that the markis said
 To this benigne veray faithful maid.

Grifilde, he said, ye shuln wel understond 8220
 It liketh to your fader and to me
 That I you wedde, and eke it may so stond,
 8195 As I suppose, ye wol that it so be:
 But thise demaundes aske I first (quod he)
 That sin it shal be don in hasty wise 8225
 Wol ye assent, or elles you avise?

I say this, be ye redy with good herte
 8200 To all my lust, and that I freely may,
 As me best thinketh, do you laugh or smerte,
 And never ye to grutchen, night ne day, 8230
 And eke whan I say Ya ye say not Nay,
 Neither by word ne frowning countenance?
 8205 Swere this, and here I swere our alliance.

Wondring upon this thing, quaking for drede,
 She saide, Lord, indigne and unworthy 8235
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,
 But as ye wol yourself right so wol I:
 8210 And here I swere that never willingly
 In werk ne thought I n'll you disobeie
 For to be ded, though me were loth to deie. 8240

This is ynough, Grifilde min, quod he.
 And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere
 8215 Out at the dore, and after than came she,

And to the peple he said in this manere;
 This is my wif, quod he, that stondeth here; 8245
 Honoureth her, and loveth hire, I pray,
 Who so me loveth; ther n'is no more to say.

* And for that nothing of hire olde gere
 She shulde bring into his hous, he bad
 That women shuld despoilen hire right there, 8250
 Of which thise ladies weren nothing glad
 To handle hire clothes wherin she was clad:
 But natheles this maiden bright of hew
 Fro foot to hed they clothed han all new.

Hire heres han they kempt, that lay untressed
 Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smal 8256
 A coroune on hire hed they han ydressed,
 And sette hire ful of nouches gret and smal.
 Of hire array what shuld I make a tale?
 Unneth the peple hire knew for hire fairnesse 8260
 Whan she transmewed was in swiche richesse.

This markis hath hire spoused with a ring
 Brought for the same cause, and than hire sette
 Upon an hors snow-white and wel ambling,
 And to his paleis, or he lenger lette, 8265
 (With joyful peple that hire lad and mette)

* 8258. *ful of nouches*] The common reading is *ouches*, but I have retained the reading of the best mss. as it may possibly assist somebody to discover the meaning of the word. I observe too that it is so written in the inventory of the effects of H. V. *Rot. Parl.* 2. H. VI. n. 31; "Item 6 broches et *nouches* d'or garniz niz de divers garnades pois 31d d'or pris 35s.

Conveyed hire; and thus the day they spende
In revel til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this Tale for to chace,
I say that to this newe markisefse 8270
God hath swiche favour sent hire of his grace,
That it ne semeth not by likelineffe
That she was borne and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote or in an oxes stall,
But nourished in an emperoures hall. 8275

To every wight she waxen is so dere
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore,
And fro hire birthe knew hire yere by yere,
Unnethes trowed they, but dorst han swore 8280
That to Janicle, of which I spake before,
She doughter n'as; for as by conjecture
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For though that ever vertuous was she,
She was encrefed in swiche excellence—
Of thewes good, yset in high bountee, 8285
And so discrete, and faire of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That eche hire loveth that loketh on hire face.

Not only of Saluces in the toun 8290
Published was the bountee of hire name,
But eke beside in many a region;
If on faith wel another faith the same:
So spredeth of hire hic bountee the fame,

That men and women, yong as wel as old, 8295
Gon to Saluces upon hire to behold.

Thus Walter lowly, nay but really,
Wedded with fortunat honestee,
In Goddes pees liveth ful esily
At home, and grace ynough outward had he: 8300
And for he saw that under low degree
Was honest vertue hid, the peple him held
A prudent man, and that is seen ful feld.

Not only this Grifildis thurgh hire wit
Coude all the fete of wisly homlineffe, 8305
But eke whan that the cas required it
The comune profit coude she redresse:
Ther n'as discord, rancour, ne hevinesse,
In all the lond that she ne coude appese,
And wisely bring hem all in hertes ese. 8310

Though that hire husbond absent were or non
If gentilmen or other of that contree
Were wroth she wolde bringen hem at on.
So wise and ripe wordes hadde she,
And jugement of so grete equitee, 8315
That she from heven sent was, as men wend,
Peple to save, and every wrong to amend.

Not longe time after that this Grifilde
Was wedded she a doughter hath ybore,
All had hire lever han borne a knave childe: 8320
Glad was the markis and his folk therfore,
For though a maiden childe come all before

She may unto a knave child atteine,
By likelyhed, sin she n'is not barreine.

Pars tertia.

Ther fell, as it befalleth times mo, 8325
Whan that this childe had souked but a throwe,
This markis in his herte longed so
To tempt his wif, hire sadnesse for to knowe,
That he ne might out of his herte throwe
This marveillous desir his wif to assay: 8330
Needles, God wot, he thought hire to affray.

He had assaied hire ynough before,
And found hire ever good: what nedeth it
Hire for to tempt, and alway more and more?
Though som men praise it for a subtil wit; 8335
But as for me, I say that evil it sit
To assay a wif whan that it is no nede,
And putten hire in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wrought in this manere:
He came a-night alone ther as she lay 8340
With sterne face and with full trouble chere,
And sayde thus, Grisilde, (quod he) that day
That I you toke out of your poure array,
And put you in estat of high noblesse,
Ye han it not forgotten, as I gesse; 8345

I say, Grisilde, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put you, as I trow,
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you toke in poure estat ful low,
For ony wele ye mote yourselven know. 8350

Take hede of every word that I you say,
 Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tway.

Ye wote yourself wel how that ye came here
 Into this hous, it is not long ago,
 And though to me ye be right lefe and dere, 8355
 Unto my gentils ye be nothing so :
 They say to hem it is gret shame and wo
 For to be suggetes, and ben in servage
 To thee, that borne art of a smal linage.

And namely sin thy doughter was ybore 8360
 Thise wordes han they spoken douteles ;
 But I desire, as I have don before,
 To live my lif with hem in rest and pees :
 I may not in this cas be reccheles :
 I mote do with thy doughter for the best, 8365
 Not as I wold, but as my gentils lest.

And yet, God wote, this is ful loth to me :
 But natheles withouten youre weting
 I wol nought do ; but thus wol I (quod he)
 That ye to me assenten in this thing ; 8370
 Shew now youre patience in youre werking
 That ye me hight and swore in youre village
 The day that maked was our mariage.

Whan she had herd all this she not ameved
 Neyther in word, in chere, ne countenance, 8375
 (For as it semed she was not agreved)
 She sayde, Lord, all lith in your plesance ;
 My child and I with hertely obeifance

Ben youre all, and ye may save or spill
Your owen thing: werketh after your will. 8380

Ther may no thing, so God my soule save,
Like unto you that may displese me;
Ne I desire nothing for to have,
Ne drede for to lese, sauf only ye:

This will is in myn herte, and ay shal be, 8385
No length of time or deth may this deface,
Ne change my corage to an other place.

Glad was this markis for hire answering,
But yet he feined as he were not so;
Al drery was his chere and his loking, 8390
Whan that he shuld out of the chambre go.
Sone after this, a furlong way or two,
He prively hath told all his entent
Unto a man, and to his wif him sent.

A maner sergeant was this prive man, 8395
The which he faithful often founden had
In thinges gret, and eke swiche folk wel can
Don execution on thinges bad;
The lord knew wel that he him loved and drad.
And whan this sergeant wist his lordes will 8400
Into the chambre he stalked him ful still.

Madame, he sayd, ye mote foryeve it me
Though I do thing to which I am constreined;
Ye ben so wise, that right wel knowen ye
That lordes hestes may not ben yfeined; 8405
They may wel be bewailed and complained,

But men mote nedes to hir lust obey,
And so wol I; ther n'is no more to say.

This child I am commanded for to take.
And spake no more, but out the child he hent 8410
Despitouſly, and gan a chere to make,
As though he wold have ſlain it or he went.
Grifildis muſt al ſuffer and al conſent;
And as a lambe ſhe ſitteth meke and ſtill,
And let this cruel ſergeant do his will. 8415

Suſpecious was the diffame of this man,
Suſpect his face, ſuſpect his word alſo,
Suſpect the time in which he this began:
Alas! hire doughter, that ſhe loved ſo,
She wende he wold han ſlaien it right tho; 8420
But natheles ſhe neither wept ne ſiked,
Conforming hire to that the markis liked.

But at the laſt to ſpeken ſhe began,
And mekely ſhe to the ſergeant praid
(So as he was a worthy gentelman) 8425
That ſhe might kiſſe hire child or that it deid;
And in hire barme this litel child ſhe leid
With ful ſad face, and gan the child to bliſſe,
And lulled it, and after gan it kiſſe.

And thus ſhe ſayd in hire benigne vois; 8430
Farewel, my child, I ſhal thee never ſee,
But ſin I have thee marked with the crois,
Of thiike fader ybleſſed mote thou be
That for us died upon a crois of tree.

Thy soule, litel child, I him betake,
For this night shalt thou dien for my sake. 8435

I trow that to a norice in this cas
It had ben hard this routhe for to see;
Wel might a moder than han cried Alas!
But natheles so fad stedfast was she 8440
That she endured all aduersitee,
And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
Have here agen your litel yonge mayde.

Goth now (quod she) and doth my lordes hest:
And o thing wold I pray you of your grace, 8445
But if my lord forbade you at the lest,
Burieth this litel body in som place
That bestes ne no briddes it to-race.
But he no word to that purpos wold say,
But toke the child, and went upon his way. 8450

This sergeant came unto his lord again,
And of Grisildes wordes and hire chere
He told him point for point, in short and plain,
And him presented with his doughter dere. 8425
Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere, 8455
But natheles his purpos held he still,
As lordes don whan they wol have hir will;

And bad this sergeant that he prively
Shulde this child ful softe wind and wrappe,
With alle circumstances tendrely, 8460
And carry it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But upon peine his hed of for to swappe

That no man shulde know of his entent,
Ne whens he came ne whider that he went;

But at Boloigne, unto his suster dere, 8465
That thilke time of Pavie was Countesse,
He shuld it take and shew hire this matere,
Beseching hire to don hire besinesse
This child to fostren in all gentillesse;
And whos child that it was he bade hire hide 8470
From every wight, for ought that may betide.

This sergeant goth, and hath fulfild this thing.
But to this marquis now retorne we;
For now goth he ful fast imagining
If by his wives chere he mighte see, 8475
Or by hire wordes apperceive, that she
Were changed; but he never coud hire finde
But ever in on ylike fad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as besy in service
And eke in love, as she was wont to be 8480
Was she to him in every maner wise;
Ne of hire doughter not a word spake she:
Non accident for non adversitee
Was seen in hire, ne never hire doughters name
Ne nevened she for ernest ne for game. 8485

¶ 8466. of *Pavie*] When the text of this Tale was printed I had not sufficiently adverted to the reading of the best mss. which is uniformly *Pauik*. I have little doubt that it should be *Panik* both here and below, ver. 8640, 8814, as in Petrarch the Marquisses sister is said to be married to the Count de Panice. In Boccace it is *de Panaga*.

Pars quarta.

In this estat ther passed ben foure yere
 Er she with childe was, but as God wold
 A knave childe she bare by this Waltere
 Ful gracious, and fair for to behold;
 And whan that folk it to his fader told, 8490
 Not only he but all his contree mery
 Was for this childe, and God they thonke and hery.

Whan it was two yere old, and from the brest
 Departed of his norice, on a day
 This markis caughte yet another lest 8495
 To tempte his wif yet ofter, if he may.
 O! nedeles was she tempted in assay:
 But wedded men ne connen no mesure
 Whan that they finde a patient creature.

Wif, quod this markis, ye han herd or this 8500
 My peple sikely beren our mariage,
 And namely sin my sone yboren is
 Now is it werse than ever in al our age:
 The murmur fleth myn herte and my corage,
 For to myn eres cometh the vois so smerte 8505
 That it wel nie destroyed hath myn herte.

Now say they thus; Whan Walter is agon
 Than shal the blood of Janicle succede,
 And ben our lord, for other han we non.
 Swiche wordes sayn my peple, it is no drede: 8510
 Wel ought I of swiche murmur taken hede,

For certainly I drede al swiche sentence,
Though they not plainen in myn audience.

I wolde live in pces if that I might;

Wherfore I am disposed utterly,

8515

As I his suster served er by night,

Right so thinke I to serve him prively.

This warne I you, that ye not sodenly

Out of yourself for no wo shuld outtraie;

Beth patient, and therof I you praie.

8520

I have, quod she, sayd thus, and ever shal,

I wol no thing, ne n'ill no thing certain,

But as you list: not greveth me at al

Though that my doughter and my sone be slain

At your commandement; that is to sain,

8525

I have not had no part of children twein

But first sikenesse and after wo and peine.

Ye ben my lord, doth with your owen thing

Right as you list: asketh no rede of me;

For as I left at home al my clothing

8530

Whan I came first to you, right so (quod she)

Left I my will and al my libertee,

And toke your clothing; wherfore I you prey

Doth your plesance, I wol youre lust obey.

And certes, if I hadde prescience

8535

Your will to know er ye your lust me told,

I wold it do withouten negligence:

But now I wote your lust, and what ye wold,

All your plesance ferme and stable I hold;

For wist I that my deth might do you ese 8540
Right gladly wold I dien you to plesse.

Deth may not maken no comparisoun
Unto your love. And whan this markis say 8545
The constance of his wif, he cast adoun
His eyen two, and wondreth how she may
In patience suffer al this array;
And forth he goth with dreery contenance,
But to his herte it was ful gret plesance. 8550

This ugly sergeant in the same wise
That he hire doughter caughte, right so he 8550
(Or werse, if men can any werse devise)
Hath hent hire sone, that ful was of beautee:
And ever in on so patient was she
That she no chere made of hevynesse,
But kist hire sone, and after gan it blesse. 8555

Save this she praied him, if that he might,
Hire litel sone he wold in erthe grave,
His tendre limmes, delicat to sight,
Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.
But she non answer of him mighte have: 8560
He went his way as him no thing ne rought,
But to Boloigne he tendrely it brought.

This markis wondreth ever lenger the more
Upon hire patience; and if that he
Ne hadde sothly knowen therbefore 8565
That parsitly hire children loved she,
He wold han wend that of som subtiltee

And of malice, or for cruel corage,
That she had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next himself certain 8570
She loved hire children best in every wise.
But now of women wold I asken fayn
If thise assaies mighten not suffise?
What coud a sturdy hufbond more devise
To preve hire wis hood and hire stedfastnesse, 8575
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swiche condition,
That whan they han a certain purpos take
They cannot flint of hir entention,
But right as they were bounden to a stake 8580
They wol not of hir firste purpos flake:
Right so this markis fully hath purposed
To tempt his wif as he was first disposed.

He waiteth if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage; 8585
But never coud he finden variance;
She was ay on in herte and in visage;
And ay the further that she was in age
The more trewe (if that it were possible)
She was to him in love, and more penible. 8590

For which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther was but o will; for as Walter lest
The same lust was hire plesance also;
And, God be thanked, all fell for the best.
She shewed wel for no worldly unrest 8595

A wif, as of hireself, no thing ne sholde
Wille in effect but as hire husbond wolde.

The sclandre of Walter wonder wide spradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a poure woman wedded hadde, 8600
Hath murdred both his children prively :
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.

No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther came no word but that they murdred were.

For which ther as his peple therbefore 8605
Had loved him wel, the sclandre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hateden therfore :
To ben a mudrour is an hateful name.

But natheles for ernest ne for game
He of his cruel purpos n'olde stente : 8610
To tempt his wif was sette all his entente.

Whan that his doughter twelf yere was of age
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wise
Enformed of his will, sent his message,
'Commanding him swiche billes to devise 8615
As to his cruel purpos may suffise,
How that the Pope, as for his peples rest,
Bade him to wed another if him lest.

I say he bade they shulden contrefete
The Popes bulles, making mention 8620

¶ 8614. *his message*] His messenger. See below, ver. 8823.
Message was commonly used for *messenger* by the French poets.
Du Cange, in v. *Messagerius*.

That he hath leve his firste wif to lete,
 As by the Popes dispensation
 To stinten rancour and dissention
 Betwix his peple and him Thus spake the bull,
 The which they han published at the full. 8625

The rude peple, as no wonder is,
 Wenden ful wel that it had ben right so;
 But whan thise tidings came to Grisildis
 I deme that hire herte was ful of wo;
 But she ylike sad for evermo 8630
 Disposed was, this humble creature,
 The adversitee of fortune al to endure;

Abiding ever his lust and his plesance
 To whom that she was yeven herte and al,
 As to hire veray worldly suffisance. 8635
 But shortly if this storie tell I shal,
 This markis writen hath in special
 A lettre, in which he sheweth his entente,
 And secretly he to Boloigne it sente

To the Erl of Pavie, which that hadde tho 8640
 Wedded his suster, prayed he specially
 To bringen home agein his children two
 In honourable estat al openly;
 But o thing he him prayed utterly,
 That he to no wight, though men wold enquire,
 Shulde not tell whos children that they were, 8646

But say the maiden shuld ywedded be
 Unto the Markis of Saluces anon.

And as this erl was prayed so did he;
 For at day sette he on his way is gon 8650
 Toward Saluces, and lordes many on
 In rich arraie, this maiden for to gide,
 Hire yonge brother riding hire beside.

Arraied was toward hire mariage
 This freshe maiden, ful of gemmes clere, 8655
 Hire brother, which that seven yere was of age,
 Arraied eke ful fresh in his manere :
 And thus in gret nobleffe and with glad chere
 Toward Saluces shaping hir journey
 Fro day to day they riden in hir way. 8660

Pars quinta.

Among al his, after this wicked usage,
 This markis yet his wif to tempten more
 To the uttereste prefe of hire corage,
 Fully to have experience and lore
 If that she were as stedefast as before, 8665
 He on a day in open audience
 Ful boistously hath said hire this sentence :

Certes, Grisilde, I had ynough plesance
 To han you to my wif for your goodnesse,
 And for your trouthe and for your obeyfance, 8670
 Not for your linage ne for your richesse;
 But now know I in veray sothfastnesse
 That in gret lordship, if I me wel avise,
 Ther is gret servitude in sondry wise.

I may not don as every ploughman may : 8675
 My peple me constreyneth for to take
 Another wif, and crien day by day ;
 And eke the Pope, rancour for to flake,
 Consenteth it, that dare I undertake :
 And trewely thus moche I wol you say, 8680
 My newe wif is coming by the way.

Be strong of herte, and void anon hire place,
 And thilke dower that ye broughten me
 Take it agen ; I grant it of my grace.
 Returneth to your fadres hous, (quod he) 8685
 No man may alway have prosperitee.
 With even herte I rede you to endure
 The stroke of Fortune or of aventure.

And she agen answerd in patience ;
 My Lord, quod she, I wote and wist alway 8690
 How that betwixen your magnificence
 And my poverte no wight ne can ne may
 Maken comparison ; it is no nay :
 I ne held me never digne in no manere
 To be your wif ne yet your chamberere. 8695

And in this hous ther ye me lady made
 (The highe God take I for my witnesse,
 And all so wisly he my soule glad)
 I never held me lady ne maistresse,
 But humble servant to your worthinesse, 8700
 And ever shal, while that my lif may dure,
 Aboven every wordly creature.

673 That ye so longe of your benigntee
 Han holden me in honour and nobley,
 Wheras I was not worthy for to be, 8705

That thanke I God and you, to whom I prey
 Foryelde it you; ther is no more to sey.

680 Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
 And with him dwell unto my lives ende.

Ther I was fostred of a childe ful smal; 8710
 Til I be ded my lif ther wol I lede,

A widew clene in body, herte, and al:

8685 For sith I yave to you my maidenhede,
 And am your trewe wif, it is no drede,
 God shilde swiche a lordes wif to take 8715
 Another man to huibond or to make.

And of your newe wif God of his grace
 8690 So graunte you wele and prosperite,
 For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
 In which that I was blisful wont to be: 8720

For sith it liketh you, my Lord, (quod she)
 That whilom weren all myn hertes rest,
 8695 That I shal gon, I wol go whan you lest.

But ther as ye me profre swiche dowaire
 As I first brought, it is wel in my mind 8725
 It were my wretched clothes, nothing faire,
 The which to me were hard now for to find.

8700 O goode God! how gentil and how kind
 Ye fumed by your speche and your visage
 The day that naked was oure marriage! 8730

But soth is said, algate I find it trewe,
 For in effect it preved is on me,
 Love is not old as whan that it is newe.
 But certes, Lord, for non adversitee
 To dien in this cas, it shal not be
 'That ever in word or werke I shal repent
 'That I you yave min herte in hole entent.

8735

My Lord, ye wote that in my fadres place
 Ye dide me stripe out of my poure wede,
 And richely ye clad me of your grace;
 'To you brought I nought elles out of drede
 But faith, and nakednesse, and maidenhede;
 And here agen your clothing I restore,
 And eke your wedding ring, for evermore.

8740

The remenant of your jeweles redy be
 Within your chambre, I dare it sassy fain.
 Naked out of my fadres hous (quod she)
 I came, and naked I mote turne again.
 All your plesance wolde I solwe fain;
 But yet I hope it be not your entent
 That I smokles out of your palcis went.

8745

8750

Ye coude not do so dishonest a thing,
 That thilke wombe, in which your children lay,
 Shulde before the peple in my walking
 Be seen al bare; wherfore I you pray
 Let me not like a worme go by the way:
 Remembre you, min owen Lord so dere,
 I was your wif, though I unworthy were.

8755

Wherfore in guerdon of my maidenhede,
 Which that I brought and not agen I bere, 8760
 As vouchesauſ to yeve me to my mede
 But swiche a smok as I was wont to were,
 That I therwith may wrie the wombe of hire
 That was your wif. And here I take my leve
 Of you, min owen Lord, lest I you greve. 8765

The smok, quod he, that thou hast on thy bake
 Let it be still, and bere it forth with thee.
 But wel unnethes thilke word he spake,
 But went his way for routhe and for pitce.
 Before the folk hireselven stripeth she, 8770
 And in hire smok, with foot and hed al bare,
 Toward hire fadres hous forth is she fare.

The folk hire solwen weping in hir wey,
 And Fortune ay they cursen as they gon;
 But she fro weping kept hire eyen drey, 8775
 Ne in this time word ne spake she non.
 Hire fader, that this tiding herd anon,
 Curseth the day and time that Nature
 Shope him to ben a lives creature.

For out of doute this olde poure man 8780
 Was ever in suspect of hire mariage;
 For ever he demed, sin it first began,
 That whan the lord fulfilled had his corage
 Him wolde thinke it were a disparage
 To his estat so lowe for to alight, 8785
 And voiden hire as sone as ever he might.

Agein his doughter hastily goth he,
 (For he by noife of folk knew hire coming)
 And with hire olde cote, as it might be,
 He covereth hire, ful forwefully weping;
 But on hire body might he it not bring,
 For rude was the cloth, and more of age
 By daies fele than at hire mariage.

8790

Thus with hire fader for a certain space
 Dwelleth this flour of wifly patience,
 That nother by hire wordes ne hire face,
 Beorn the folk, ne eke in hir abfence,
 Ne fhewed fhe that hire was don offence,
 Ne of hire high estat no remembrance
 Ne hadde fhe as by hire contenance.

8795

8800

No wonder is, for in hire gret estat
 Hire goft was ever in pleine humilitee;
 No tendre mouth, no herte delicat,
 No pompe, no femblant of realtee,
 But ful of patient benignitee,
 Discrete, and prideles, ay honourable,
 And to hire hufbond ever meke and ftable.

8805

Men fpeke of Job, and moft for his humbleffe,
 As clerkes whan hem list can wel endite,
 Namely of men, but as in fothfaftneffe,
 Though clerkes preifen women but a lite,
 Ther can no man in humbleffe him acquite
 As woman can, ne can be half fo trewe
 As women ben, but it be falle of newe.

8810

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Pars sexta.

8790 Fro Boloigne is this Erl of Pavie come, 8815
 Of which the fame up sprang to more and lesse;
 And to the peples eres all and some
 Was couth eke that a newe markifesse
 He with him brought in swiche pomp and richeffe,
 That never was ther seen with mannes eye 8820
 So noble array in al West Lumbardie.

8795 The markis, which that shope and knew all this,
 Er that this erl was come sent his meffage
 For thilke poure fely Grisildis,
 And she with humble herte and glad visage, 8825
 Not with no swollen thought in hire corage,
 8800 Came at his hest, and on hire knees hire sette,
 And reverently and wisely she him grette.

Grisilde, (quod he) my will is utterly
 This maiden that shal wedded be to me 8830
 Received be to-morwe as really
 8805 As it possible is in myn hous to be;
 And eke that every wight in his degree
 Have his estat in sitting and service,
 And high plesance, as I can best devise. 8835

I have no woman sufficient certain
 8810 The chambres for to array in ordinance
 After my lust, and therefore wolde I fain
 That thin were all swiche manere governance;
 Thou knowest eke of old all my plesance: 8840
 Though thin array be bad, and evil besey,
 Do thou thy devoir at the leste way.

Not only, Lord, that I am glad (quod she)
 To don your lust, but I desire also
 You for to serve and plesse in my degree 8845
 Withouten fainting, and shal evermo :
 Ne never for no wele ne for no wo
 Ne shal the gost within myn herte stente
 To love you best with all my trewe entente.

And with that word she gan the hous to dight,
 And tables for to sette, and beddes make, 8851
 And peined her to don all that she might,
 Praying the chambereres for Goddes sake
 To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake ;
 And she, the moste serviceable of all, 8855
 Hath every chambre arraied and his hall.

Abouten undern gan this erl alight
 That with him brought thise noble children twey,
 For which the peple ran to see the fight
 Of hir array, so richely besey ; 8860
 And than at erst amonges hem they sey
 That Walter was no fool, though that him lest
 To change his wif, for it was for the best.

For she is fairer, as they demen all,
 Than is Grisilde, and more tendre of age, 8865
 And fairer fruit betwene hem shulde fall,
 And more plesant, for hire high linage :
 Hire brother eke so faire was of visage
 That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesance,
 Commending now the markis governance. 8870

O stormy peple, unsad and ever untrewē,
 And undiscrete and changing as a fane,
 Delighting ever in rombel that is newe,
 For like the mone waxen ye and wane :
 Ay ful of clapping, dere ynough a jane, 8875
 Your dome is fals, your constance evil preveth,
 A ful gret fool is he that on you leveth!

Thus saiden fadē folk in that citee
 Whan that the peple gased up and down,
 For they were glad right for the noveltee 8880
 To have a newe lady of hir toun.

No more of this make I now mentioun,
 But to Grisilde agen I wol me dresse,
 And telle hire constance and hire besinesse.

Ful besy was Grisilde in every thing 8885
 That to the feste was appertinent;
 Right naught was she abaist of hire clothing,
 Though it were rude, and somdel eke to-rent,
 But with glad chere to the yate is went,
 With other folk, to grete the markisse, 8890
 And after that doth forth hire besinesse.

With so glad chere his gesses she receiveth,
 And conningly everich in his degree,
 That no defaute no man apperceiveth,
 But ay they wondren what she mighte be 8895
 That in so poure array was for to see
 And coude swiche honour and reverence,
 And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In all this mene while she ne stent
 This maide and eke hire brother to commend 8900
 With all hire herte in ful benigne entent,
 So wel that no man coud hire preise amend;
 But at the last whan that thise lordes wend
 To sitten down to mete, he gan to call
 Grisilde, as she was besy in the hall. 8905

Grisilde, (quod he, as it were in his play)
 How liketh thee my wif and hire beautee?
 Right wel, my Lord, quod she, for in good fay
 A fairer saw I never non than she;
 I pray to God yeve you prosperitee, 8910
 And so I hope that he wol to you send
 Plesance ynough unto your lives end.

O thing besече I you and warne also,
 That ye ne prikke with no turmenting
 This tendre maiden as ye han do mo, 8915

¶ 8915. *as ye han do mo*] For *me*. This is one of the most licentious corruptions of orthography that I remember to have observed in Chaucer. All that can be said in excuse of him is, that the old poets of other countries have not been more scrupulous. Quadrio has a long chapter [*L. ii. Diss. iv. cap. iv.*] upon the licences taken by the Italian poets, and especially Dante, (the most licentious, as he says, of them all) for the sake of rhyme. As long a chapter might easily be filled with the irregularities which the old French poets committed for the same reason. It should seem that while orthography was so variable as it was in all the living European languages before the invention of printing, the poets thought it generally adviseable to sacrifice propriety of spelling to exactness of rhyming: of the former offence there were but few judges, the latter was obvious to the eye of every reader.

For she is fostred in hire nourishing
 More tendrely, and to my supposing
 She mighte not adversitee endure
 As coude a poure fostred creature.

And whan this Walter saw hire patience, 8920
 Hire glade chere, and no malice at all,
 And he so often hadde hire don offence,
 And she ay fadde and constant as a wall,
 Continuing ever hire innocence over all,
 This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse 8925
 To rewe upon hire wisly stedefastnesse.

This is ynough, Grisilde min, quod he,
 Be now no more agast ne evil apaid,
 I have thy faith and thy benignitee,
 As wel as ever woman was, assaid 8930
 In gret estat and pourelich arraid:
 Now know I, dere wif, thy stedefastnesse;
 And hire in armes toke, and gan to kesse.

And she for wonder toke of it no kepe;
 She herde not what thing he to hire said; 8935
 She ferde as she had flert out of a slepe,
 Til she out of hire masednesse abraid.
 Grisilde, quod he, by God that for us deid
 Thou art my wif; non other I ne have
 Ne never had, as God my soule save. 8940

This is thy doughter which thou hast supposed
 To be my wif; that other faithfully
 Shal be min heir, as I have ay disposed;

8900

8905

8910

8915

the most
 er to have
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 p. iv.] up-
 ally Dante,
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Thou bare hem of thy body trewely;
At Boloigne have I kept hem prively: 8945
Take hem agen, for now maist thou not say
That thou hast lorn non of thy children tway.

And folk that otherwise han said of me,
I warne hem wel that I have don this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee, 8950
But for to assay in thee thy womanhede,
And not to flee my children (God forbede)
But for to kepe hem prively and still
Til I thy purpos knew and all thy will.

Whan she this herd aswoune down she falleth 8955
For pitous joye; and after hire swouning
She both hire yonge children to hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitously weping,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissing
Ful like a moder, with hire salte teres 8960
She bathed both hir visage and hir heres.

O, which a pitous thing it was to see
Hire swouning, and hire humble vois to here!
Grand mercy! Lord, God thank it you (quod she)
That ye han saved me my children dere: 8965
Now rekke I never to be ded right here,
Sin I stond in your love and in your grace,
No force of deth, ne whan my spirit pace.

O tendre, o dere, o yonge, children mine!
Your woful mother wened stedfastly 8970
That cruel houndes or som foul vermine

Had eten you; but God of his mercy
 And your benigne fader tendrely
 Hath don you kepe: and in that same flound
 Al sodenly she swapt adoun to ground. 8973

And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she
 Hire children two, whan she gan hem embrace,
 That with gret sleight and gret difficultee
 The children from hire arm they gan arrace.
 O! many a tere on many a pitous face 8980
 Doun ran of hem that stoden hire beside;
 Unnethe abouten hire might they abide.

Walter hire gladeth, and hire sorwe slaketh;
 She riseth up abashed from hire trance,
 And every wight hire joye and feste maketh 8985
 Til she hath caught agen hire contenance.
 Walter hire doth so faithfully plesance,
 That it was deintee for to seen the chere
 Betwix hem two sin they ben met in fere.

Thise ladies, whan that they hir time sey, 8990
 Han taken hire, and into chambre gon,
 And stripen hire out of hire rude arrey,
 And in a cloth of gold that brighte shone,
 With a coroune of many a riche stone
 Upon hire hed, they into hall hire broughte, 8995
 And ther she was honoured as hire ought.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful end,
 For every man and woman doth his might
 This day in mirth and revel to dispend

Til on the welkin shone the sterres bright; 9000
 For more solempne in every mannes sight
 This feste was, and greter of costage,
 Than was the revel of hire mariage.

Ful many a yere in high prosperitee
 Liven thise two in concord and in rest, 9005
 And richely his doughter married he
 Unto a lord, on of the worthiest
 Of all itaille, and than in pees and rest
 His wives fader in his court he kepeth
 Til that the soule out of his body crepeth. 9010

His sone succedeth in his heritage,
 In rest and pees, after his fadres day,
 And fortunat was eke in mariage,
 Al put he not his wif in gret assay:
 This world is not so strong, it is no nay, 9015
 As it hath ben in olde times yore,
 And herkneth what this auſtour saith therfore.

This story is said, not for that wives shuld
 Folwe Grisilde as in humilitee,
 For it were importable tho they wold, 9020
 But for that every wight in his degree
 Shulde be constant in adversitee
 As was Grisilde, therfore Petrark writeth
 This storie, which with stile he enditeth.

For sith a woman was so patient 9025
 Unto a mortal man, wel more we ought
 Receiven all in gree that God us sent.

9000 For gret skill is he preve that he wrought;
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought,
As saith Seint Jame, if ye his pistell rede; 9030
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede;

9005 And suffreth us, as for our exercise,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee
Ful often to be bete in sondry wise,
Not for to know our will, for certes he 9035
Or we were borne knew all our freeletee,
And for our best is all his governance;
9010 Let us than live in vertuous suffrance.

But o word, Lordings, herkneth or I go:
It were ful hard to finden now adayes 9040
In all a toun Grisildes three or two;
For if that they were put to swiche assayes
9015 The gold of hem hath now so bad alayes
With bras, that though the coine be faire at eye
It wolde rather braist atwo than plie. 9045

For which here, for the Wives love of Bathe,
Whos lif and al hire secte God maintene
9020 In high maistrice, and elles were it scathe,
I wol with lusty herte freshe and grene
Say you a song to gladen you I wene, 9050
And let us thint of earnestful matere.
Herkneth my song, that saith in this manere:

9025 Grisilde is ded, and eke hire patience,
And both at ones buried in Itaille,
For which I crië in open audience, 9055

No wedded man so hardy be to assaille
 His wives patience, in trust to find
 Grisildes, for in certain he shal faille.

O noble wives! ful of high prudence,
 Let non humilitee your tonges naile, 9060
 Ne let no clerk have cause or diligence
 To write of you a storie of swiche mervaille
 As of Grisildis, patient and kinde,
 Lest Chichevache you swalwe in hire entraille.

Folweth Ecco, that holdeth no silence, 9065
 But ever answereth at the countretaille :
 Beth not bedazzled for your innocence,
 But sharply taketh on you the governaille :
 Emprementh wel this lesson in your minde
 For comun profit, sith it may availle. 9070

Ye archewives! stondeth ay at defence,
 Sin ye be strong as is a gret camaille,
 Ne suffreth not that men do you offence.

v. 9064. *Lest Chichevache*] This excellent reading is restored upon the authority of the best mss. instead of the common one, *Cheebisface*. The allusion is to the subject of an old ballad, which is still preserved in ms. *Harl.* 2251, fol. 270, b. It is a kind of pageant, in which two beasts are introduced called *Bycorne* and *Chichevache*. The first is supposed to feed upon obedient husbands, and the other upon patient wives; and the humour of the piece consists in representing *Bycorne* as pampered with a superfluity of food, and *Chichevache* as half starved.—In Stowe's Catalogue of Lydgate's works, at the end of Speght's edit. of Chaucer, there is one entitled "Of two monstrous beasts, "*Bycorne* and *Chichevache*." It is not improbable that Lydgate translated the ballad now extant from some older French poem to which Chaucer alludes. The name of *Chichevache* is French, *vacca parca*.

And sclendre wives, feble as in bataille,
 Beth egre as is a tigre yond in Inde; 9075
 Ay clappeth as a mill I you counsaile!

Ne drede hem not, doth hem no reverence,
 For though thin husbond armed be in maille 9080
 The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
 Shal perce his brest and eke his aventaille: 9080
 In jalousie I rede eke thou him binde,
 And thou shalt make him couche as doth a quaille.

If thou be faire, ther folk ben in presence
 Shew thou thy visage and thin aparaille;
 If thou be soule be free of thy dispence; 9085
 To get thee frendes ay do thy travaille:
 Be ay of chere as light as lefe on linde,
 And let him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waille.

¶ 9080. *aventaille*] The forepart of the armour, *sk.* He deduces it from *avant*. But *ventaille* was the common name for that aperture in a close helmet through which the wearer was to breathe. [*Nicot.* in v.] so that perhaps *aventaille* meant originally an helmet with such an aperture; *un beaume à ventaille*.

¶ 9088. *and wringe, and waille*] Beside the mss. C. 1. *Ask.* 1, 2, and others, we have the authority of both Caxton's editt. for concluding *The Clerk's Tale* in this manner. I say nothing of the two editt. by Pynson, as they are mere copies of Caxton's second: but I must not conceal a circumstance which seems to contradict the supposition that *The Marchant's Prologue* followed immediately. In those same mss. the following stanza is interposed;

This worthy Clerk, whan ended was his Tale,
 Oure Hoste saide and swore by sockes bones,
 Me were lever than a barrel of ale
 My wif at home had herd this legend ones:
 This is a gentil Tale for the nones,
 As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille;
 But thing that wol not be let it be stille.

THE MARCHANTES PROLOGUE.

WEPING and wailing, care, and other sorwe,
 I have ynough on even and on morwe, 9090
 Quod the Marchant, and so have other mo
 That wedded ben; I trowe that it be so,
 For wel I wot it fareth so by me.
 I have a wif the werste that may be,
 For though the fend to hire ycoupled were 9095
 She wolde him overmatche I dare wel swere.
 What shulde I you reherse in special
 Hire high malice? she is a shrew at al.

Whatever may be thought of the genuineness of these lines they can at best, in my opinion, be considered as a fragment of an unfinished prologue which Chaucer might once have intended to place at the end of *The Clerkes Tale*. When he determined to connect that Tale with *The Marchant's* in another manner, he may be supposed, notwithstanding, to have left this stanza for the present uncanceled in his ms. He has made use of the thought, and some of the lines, in the Prologue which connects *The Monkes Tale* with *Melibee*, ver. 13895—13900---The two additional stanzas, which were first printed in ed. *Urr.* from ms. *F.* [*H.* 1, in *Urry's* list,] and which serve to introduce *The Frankelein's Tale* next to *The Clerkes*, are evidently, I think, spurious. They are not found, as I recollect, in any ms. except that cited by Mr. Urry, and ms. *B.* If these two mss. were of much greater age and authority than they really are they would weigh but little in opposition to the number and character of those mss. in which these stanzas are wanting, and in which *The Marchant's Tale* stands next to *The Clerkes*.---Another proof of the spuriousness of these stanzas is, that they are almost entirely made up of lines taken from the Prologue which, in this edition, upon the authority of the best mss. is prefixed to *The Squieres Tale*. See below ver. 10301.

Ther is a long and a large difference
 Betwix Grifildes grete patience 9100
 And of my wife the passing crueltee.
 Were I unbounden, all so mote I the,
 I wolde never eft comen in the snare.
 We wedded men live in forwe and care:
 Assay it who so wol, and he shal finde 9105
 That I say soth, by Seint Thomas of Inde,
 As for the more part, I say not alle;
 God shilde that it shoulde so befall.

A, good Sire Hoste, I have ywedded be
 Thise monethes two, and more not parde; 9110
 And yet I trowe that he that all his lif
 Wifes hath ben, though that men wolde him rise
 Into the herte, ne coude in no manere
 Tellen so much forwe as I you here
 Coud tellen of my wives cursednesse. 9115
 Now, quod our Hoste, Marchant, so God you blesse,
 Sin ye so mochel knowen of that art
 Ful hertely I pray you tell us part.
 Gladly, quod he, but of min owen fore,
 For sory herte I tellen may no more. 9120

THE MARCHANTES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwelling in Lumbardie
 A worthy knight, that born was at Pavie,

The Marchantes Tale] Old January marrieth young May, and
 for his unequal match receiveth a foul reward. *Urry.*

In which he lived in gret prosperitee;
 And sixty yere a wiffes man was he,
 And solwed ay his bodily delit 9125
 On women ther as was his appetit,
 As don thise fooles that ben seculere.
 And whan that he was passed sixty yere,
 Were it for holinesse or for dotage
 I cannot fain, but swiche a gret corage 9130
 Hadde this knight to ben a wedded man,
 That day and night he doth all that he can
 To espien wher that he might wedded be,
 Praying our Lord to granten him that he
 Mighte ones knowen of that blisful lif 9135
 That is betwix an husbond and his wif,
 And for to live under that holy bond
 With which God firste man and woman bond.
 Non other lif (said he) is worth a bene;
 For wedlok is so esy and so clene 9140
 That in this world it is a paradise.
 Thus saith this olde knight that was so wise.
 And certainly, as soth as God is king,
 To take a wif it is a glorious thing,
 And namely whan a man is old and hore, 9145
 Than is a wif the fruit of his trefore;
 Than shuld he take a yong wif and a faire,
 On which he might engendren him an heire,
 And lede his lif in joye and in solas,
 Wheras thise bachelers singen alas! 9150

Whan that they finde any aduersitee
In love, which n'is but childish vanitee.

9125 And trewely it fit wel to be so
That bachelers have often peine and wo :
On brotel ground they bilde, and brotelnesse 9155

They finden whan they wenen sikernessee :

They live but as a bird or as a beste,

9130 In libertee and under non areite,

Ther as a wedded man in his estat

Liveth a lif blisful and ordinat, 9160

Under the yoke of mariage ybound ;

Wel may his herte in joye and blisse abound :

9135 For who can be so buxom as a wif ?

Who is so trewe and eke so ententif

To kepe him, fike and hole, as is his make ? 9165

For wele or wo she n'ill him not forsake ;

She n'is not wery him to love and serve

9140 Though that he lie bedrede til that he sterve.

And yet som clerkes fain it is not so,

Of which he Theophrast is on of tho. 9170

What force though Theophrast list for to lie ?

Ne take no wif, quod he, for husbondrie,

9145 v. 9172. *Ne take no wif*] What follows, to ver. 9180 incl. is
taken from the *Liber aurcolus Theophrasti de nuptiis*, as quoted

by Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and from thence by John

of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xl. ; " Quod si propter dispen-

" sationem domus, et languoris solatia, et fugam solitudinis,

" ducuntur uxores, multo melius dispensat servus fidelis, &c.

9150 " Assidere autem ægrotanti magis possunt amici et vernulæ

As for to spare in household thy dispencc :
 A trewe servant doth more diligence
 Thy good to kepe than doth thin owen wif, 9175
 For she wol claimien half part al hire lif.
 And if that thou be fike, so God me save,
 Thy veray frendes or a trewe knave
 Wol kepe thee bet than she, that waiteth ay
 After thy good, and hath don many a day. 9180
 This sentence, and an hundred thinges werse,
 Writeth this man, ther God his bones curse.
 But take no kepe of al swiche vanitee;
 Desieth Theophrast, and herkeneth me.

"beneficiis obligati quam illa, quæ nobis imputet lacrymas
 suas." 57.

¶ 9180. *many a day*] After this verse, in the common edit.
 are these two ;

And if thou take to thee a wife untrew
 Full oftentime it shall thee fore rew.

In mss. *A. C.* and *B. α.* they stand thus—

And if thou take a wif be wel ywar
 Of ou^{peril} thing^{thing} whiche I declare ne dar.

In mss. *C. 1*, *H. A. D.* thus—

And if thou take a wif of heye lynage
 she shal be hauteyn and of gret coslage.

In ms. *B. δ.* thus —

And if thou take a wif in thin age olde
 Fel lightly mayn thou be a cokewold.

In mss. *A. B. 1, 2*, *E. H. B. 6*, *N. c.* and both Caxton's edit. they
 are entirely omitted, and so I believe they should be. If any
 one of those couplets should be allowed to be from the hand
 of Chaucer, it can only be considered as the opening of a new
 argument, which the Author for some reason or other imme-
 diately abandoned, and consequently would have cancelled if
 he had lived to publish his Work.

A wif is Goddes yefte veraily; 9185
 All other maner yeftes hardely,
 As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
 Or mebles, all ben yeftes of Fortune,
 That passen as a shadow on the wall:
 But drede thou not if plainly speke I shal; 9190
 A wif wol last and in thin hous endure
 Wel longer than thee list paraventure.

Mariage is a ful gret iacrament;
 He which that hath no wif I hold him shent;
 He liveth helples and all desolat: 9195
 (I speke of folk in seculer estat)
 And herkeneth why, I say not this for nought,
 That woman is for mannes helpe ywrought:
 The highe God, whan he had Adam maked,
 And saw him al alone belly naked, 9200
 God of his grete goodnesse saide than,
 Let us now make an helpe unto this man
 Like to himself, and than he made him Eve.

Here may ye see, and hereby may ye preve,
 That a wif is mannes helpe and his comfort, 9205
 His paradis terrestre, and his disport:
 So buxom and so vertuous is she,
 They mosten nedes live in unitee:
 O flesh they ben, and o flesh, as I gesse,
 Hath but on herte in wele and in distresse. 9210

A wif? a! Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
 How might a man have any adversite

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That hath a wif? certes I cannot seye.
 The blisse the which that is betwix hem tweye
 Ther may no tonge telle or herte thinke. 9215
 If he be poure she helpeth him to swinke;
 She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a del;
 All that hire husbond doth hire liketh wel:
 She saith not ones Nay whan he saith Ye:
 Do this, saith he; Al redy, Sire, saith she. 9220
 O blisful ordre, o wedlok precious!
 Thou art so mery and eke so vertuous,
 And so commended and approved eke,
 That every man that holt him worth a leke
 Upon his bare knees ought all his lif 9225
 Thanken his God that him hath sent a wif,
 Or elles pray to God him for to send
 A wif to last unto his lives end;
 For than his lif is set in sikernesse,
 He may not be deceived, as I gessie, 9230
 So that he werche after his wives rede;
 Than may he boldly beren up his hede,
 They ben so trewe, and therewithal so wise;
 For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wise,
 Do alway so as women wol thee rede. 9235
 Lo how that Jacob, as thise clerkes rede,
 By good conseil of his mother Rebekke
 Bounde the kiddes skin about his nekke,

v. 9236. *Lo how that Jacob*] The same instances are quoted
 in Melibeus.

For which his fadres benifon he wan.

Lo Judith, as the storie eke tell can,
By good conseil she Goddes peple kept,
And slow him Holofernes while he slept.

Lo Abigail, by good conseil how she
Saved hire husbond Nabal, whan that he
Shuld han be slain. And loke, Hester also

By good conseil delivered out of wo
The peple of God, and made him Mardochee
Of Affuere enhaunfed for to be.

Ther n'is no thing in gree superlatif
(As saith Senek) above an humble wif.
Suffer thy wives tonge, as Caton bit;
She shal command and thou shalt suffren it,
And yet she wol obey of curtesie.

A wif is keper of thin husbondrie:
Wel may the fike man bewaile and wepe
Ther as ther is no wif the hous to kepe.
I warne thee, if wisely thou wilt werche,
Love wel thy wif as Crist loveth his cherche:
If thou lovest thyself love thou thy wif.

No man hateth his fieth, but in his lif

¶ 9250. (*As saith Senek*)] In marg. C. 1; "Sicut nihil est
"superius benignâ conjugē, ita nihil est crudelius infestâ mu-
"liere." *Seneca*.

¶ 9251. *as Caton bit*] i. e. biddeth. See the n. on ver. 187.
The line referred to is quoted in marg. C. 1;
Uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento.
It is in *L. iii. Dist. 25*.

¶ 9259. *If thou lovest thyself*] The allusion is to *Ephes. v.*
28. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. The mss. read—If
thou lovest thyself *thou lovest* thy wif—which I think is cer-

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9260

He fostreth it, and therefore bid I thee
 Cherish thy wif, or thou shalt never the.
 Husbond and wif, what so men jape or play,
 Of worldly folk holden the siker way :
 They ben so knit ther may non harm betide, 9265
 And namely upon the wives side.

For which this January, of whom I told,
 Considered hath within his dayes old
 The lusty lif, the vertuous quite,
 That is in mariage honey-swete, 9270
 And for his frendes on a day he sent
 To tellen hem th' effect of his entent.

With face sad his tale he hath hem told :
 He sayde, Frendes, I am hore and old,
 And almost (God wot) on my pittes brinke, 9275
 Upon my soule somewhat most I thinke.
 I have my body folily dispended,
 Blessed be God that it shal ben amended !
 For I wol ben certain a wedded man,
 And that anon in all the hast I can. 9280
 Unto som maiden, faire and tendre of age,
 I pray you shapeth for my mariage
 All sodenly, for I wol not abide ;
 And I wol soude to espie on my side
 To whom I may be wedded hastily. 9285

But for as moche as ye ben more than I
 tainly wrong. I have printed, from conjecture only—*love thou
 thy wif*. But upon reconsidering the passage I think it may be
 brought still nearer to the apostle's doctrine by writing—*Thou
 lovest thyself if thou lovest thy wif*.

Ye shullen rather swiche a thing espien
Than I, and wher me beste were to allien.

But o thing warn I you, my frendes dere,
I wol non old wif han in no manere ; 9290

9265 She shal not passen twenty yere certain :
Old fish and yonge flesh wold I have fain.

Bet is (quod he) a pike than a pikerel,
And bet than old beef is the tendre veel.

I wol no woman thirty yere of age ; 9295
It is but benestraw and gret forage.

And eke thise olde widewes (God it wote)
They connen so moch craft on Wades bote,
So mochel broken harm whan that hem lest,
That with hem shuld I never live in rest. 9300

9275 For sondry scoles maken subtil clerkes ;
Woman of many scoles half a clerk is.

But certainly a yong thing men may gie,
Right as men may warm wax with handes plie ;

9280 ¶. 9298. *Wades bote*] Upon this Mr. Speght remarks as follows ; “ Concerning *Wade* and his *bote*, called Guingelot, as “ also his straunge exploits in the same, because the matter is “ long and fabulous I passe it over.”——*Tantum rem tam negligenter ?* Mr. Speght probably did not foresee that posterity would be as much obliged to him for a little of this fabulous matter concerning *Wade* and his *bote* as for the gravest of his annotations. The story of *Wade* is mentioned again by our Author in his *Troilus*, iii. 615 ;

9285 He songe, the playde, he tolde a tale of *Wade*.
It is there put proverbially for any romantick history ; but the allusion in the present passage to *Wades bote* can hardly be explained without a more particular knowledge of his adventures than we are now likely ever to attain.

—love thou
it may be
ng—Thou

Wherefore I say you plainly in a clause 9305
I wol non old wif han right for this cause.

For if so were I hadde swiche meschance,
That I in hire ne coude have no plesance,
Than shuld I lede my lif in avourtrie,
And so streight to the devil whan I die. 9310

Ne children shuld I non upon hire geten;
Yet were me lever houndes had me eten
Than that nin heritage shulde fall
In straunge hondes; and this I tell you all.

I dote not, I wot the cause why 9315

Men shulden wedde; and furthermore wot I

Ther speketh many a man of mariage

That wot no more of it than wot my page

For which capses a man shuld take a wif.

If he ne may not liven chaff his lif, 9320

Take him a wif with gret devotion,

Because of leful procreation

Of children, to the honour of God above,

And not only for paramour or love,

And for they shulden lecherie eschue, 9325

And yeld hir dette whan that it is due,

Or for that eche of hem shuld helpen other

In meschese, as a suster shal the brother,

And live in chastitee ful holily.

But, Sires, (by your leve) that am not I, 9330

For, God be thanked, I dare make avaunt

I fele my limmes stark and sufficient

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Volum

To don all that a man belongeth to :
 I wot myselven best what I may do.
 Though I be hoor I fare as doth a tre 9335
 That blofmeth er the fruit ywoxen be ;
 The blofmy tre n'is neither drie ne ded :
 I fele me no wher hoor but on my hed :
 Min herte and all my limmes ben as grene
 As laurer thurgh the yere is for to sene. 9340
 And fin that ye han herd all min entent
 I pray you to my will ye wolde assent.

Diverse men diversely him told
 Of mariage many ensamples old ;
 Som blamed it, som praised it certain : 9345
 But atte laste, shortly for to sain,
 (As all day falleth altercation
 Betwixen frendes in disputifon)
 Ther fell a strif betwix his brethren two,
 Of which that on was cleped Placebo, 9350
 Justinus sothly called was that other.

Placebo sayd, O January ! brother,
 Ful litel nede han ye, my lord so dere,
 Conseil to aske of any that is here,
 But that ye ben so ful of sapience 9355
 That you ne liketh for your high prudence

¶ 9348. *disputifon*] Disputation ; so ver. 11202, 15244. See
 Gower, *Conf. Amant.* fol. 15. b. ;

In great *desputefon* they were.
 and fol. 150, b. 151, b.

Volume III.

O

To weiven fro the word of Salomon;
 This word sayd he unto us everich on,
 Werke alle thing by conseil, thus sayd he,
 And than ne shalt thou not repenten thee. 9360
 But though that Salomon spake swiche a word,
 Min owen dere brother and my lord,
 So wisly God my soule bringe at rest,
 I hold your owen conseil is the best.

For, brother min, take of me this motif, 9365
 I have now ben a court-man all my lif,
 And God it wot, though I unworthy be,
 I have stonden in ful gret degree
 Abouten lordes of ful high estat,
 Yet had I never with non of hem debat; 9370
 I never hem contraried trewely.
 I wot wel that my lord can more than I;
 What that he saith I holde it firme and stable;
 I say the same, or elles thing semblable.
 A ful gret fool is any conseillour, 9375
 That serveth any lord of high honour,
 That dare presume, or ones thinken it,
 That his conseil shuld passe his lordes wit:
 Nay, lordes be no fooles by my fay.
 Ye han yourselven shewed here to-day 9380
 So high sentence, so holily, and wel,
 That I consent, and confirme every del
 Your wordes all, and your opinioun.
 By God ther n'is no man in all this toun,

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 v. 2409.
 v. 2410.
 mannish woe

Ne in Itaille, coud bet han yfayd: 9385

Crist holt him of this conseil wel appaid.

And trewely it is an high corage

9360 Of any man that stopen is in age

To take a young wif: by my fader kin

Your herte hongeth on a joly pin. 9390

Doth now in this matere right as you lest,

For finally I hold it for the best.

9365 Justinus, that ay stille sat and herd,

Right in this wise he to Placebo answerd:

Now, brother min, be patient I pray, 9395

Sin ye han said, and herkneth what I say.

Senek, among his other wordes wise,

9370 Saith that a man ought him right wel avise

To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel:

And sith I ought avisen me right wel 9400

To whom I yeve my good away fro me,

Wel more I ought avisen me, parde,

9375 To whom I yeve my body; for alway

I warne you wel it is no childes play

To take a wif without avisement. 9405

Men must enqueren (this is min assent)

Wheder she be wise and sobre or dronkelewe,

9380 Or proud, or elles other waies a shrew,

A chidester, or a wastour of thy good,

Or riche or poure, or elles a man is wood: 9410

v. 9409. *a chidester*] So ms. A. See the note on ver. 2019.

v. 9410. *a man is wood*] In ms. A. *mannisbewed*; in C. 1, *mannish wood*.

Al be it so that no man finden shal
 Non in this world that trotteth hol in al,
 Ne man ne beste, swiche as men can devise,
 But natheles it ought ynough suffice
 With any wif, if so were that she had 9413
 Mo goode thewes than hire vices bad :
 And all this axeth leiser to enquire;
 For God it wot I have wept many a tere
 Ful prively sin that I had a wif.
 Praise who so wol a wedded mannes lif, 9420
 Certain I find in it but cost and care,
 And observances of alle blisses bare;
 And yet, God wot, my neigheours aboute,
 And namely of women many a route,
 Sain that I have the moste stedefast wif, 9425
 And eke the mekest on, that bereth lif :
 But I wot best wher wringeth me my sho.
 Ye may for me right as you liketh do.
 Aviseþ you, ye ben a man of age,
 How that ye entren into mariage, 9430
 And namely with a yong wif and a faire.
 By him that made water, fire, erthe, and aire,
 The yongest man that is in all this route
 Is besy ynow to bringen it aboute
 To han his wif alone, trusteth me : 9435
 Ye shul not plesen hire fully yeres three,
 This is to sain, to don hire ful plesance :
 A wif axeth ful many an observance.

I pray you that ye be not evil appaid.

Wel, quod this January, and hast thou saide? 9440
Straw for Senek, and straw for thy proverbes;

I counte not a panier ful of herbes

9413 Of scole termes : wiser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assented here right now
To my purpos. Placebo, what saye ye? 9445

I say it is a cursed man, quod he,
That letteth matrimoine fikerly.

9420 And with that word they risen sodenly,
And ben assented fully that he sholde
Be wedded whan him list and wher he wolde. 9450

High fantasie and curious besinesse
Fro day to day gan in the soule empresse

9425 Of January about his mariage :
Many a faire shap and many a faire visage
Ther passeth thurgh his herte night by night. 9455

As who so toke a mirrour polished bright,
And set it in a comune market place,

9430 Then shuld he see many a figure pace
By his mirrour, and in the same wise
Gan January in with his thought devise 9460

Of maidens which that dwelten him beside;
He wiste not wher that he might abide;

9435 For if that on have beautee in hire face,
Another stont so in the peples grace,
For hire sadnesse and hire benignitee, 9465
That of the peple the greteft vois hath she :

And som were riche and hadden a bad name;
 But natheles, betwix ernest and game,
 He at the last appointed him on on,
 And let all other from his herte gon, 9470
 And chees hire of his owen auctoritee,
 For love is blind all day and may not see.
 And whan that he was in his bed ybrought
 He purtreied in his herte and in his thought
 Hire freshe beautee and hire age tendre, 9475
 Hire middel smal, hire armes long and sclendre,
 Hire wise governance, hire gentilleffe,
 Hire womanly bering, and hire sadnesse.

And whan that he on hire was condescended
 Him thought his chois it might not ben amended;
 For whan that he himself concluded had 9481
 Him thought eche other mannes wit so bad
 That impossible it were to replie
 Again his chois: this was his fantasie.

His frendes sent he to, at his instance, 9485
 And praied hem to don him that plesance
 That hastily they wolden to him come;
 He wolde abregge hir labour all and some:
 Neded no more to hem to go ne ride,
 He was appointed ther he wolde abide. 9490

Placebo came, and eke his frendes sone,
 And alderfirst he bade hem all a bone,
 That non of hem non argumentes make
 Again the purpos that he hath ytake;

Which purpos was plesant to God (said he) 9495
And veray ground of his prosperitee.

He said ther was a maiden in the toun
Which that of beautee hadde gret renoun,
Al were it so she were of smal degree;
Sufficeth him hire youth and hire beautee; 9500
Which maid (he said) he wold han to his wif,
To lede in ese and holinesse his life;

And thanked God that he might han hire all,
That no wight with his blisse parten shall;
And praied hem to labour in this nede, 9505
And shapen that he faille not to spede:

For than, he sayd, his spirit was at ese;
Than is (quod he) nothing may me displese,
Save o thing pricketh in my conscience,
The which I wol reherse in your presence. 9510

I have (quod he) herd said ful yore ago
Ther may no man han parfite blisses two,
This is to say, in erthe and eke in heven;
For though he kepe him fro the sinnes seven,
And eke from every branch of thilke tree, 9515
Yet is ther so parfit felicitee,

And so gret ese and lust, in mariage,
That ever I am agast, now in min age,
That I shal leden now so mery a lif,
So delicat, withouten wo or strif, 9520
That I shal han min heven in erthe here;
For sin that veray heven is bought so dere,

With tribulation and gret penance,
 How shuld I than, living in swiche plesance
 As alle wedded men don with hir wives, 9525
 Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on live is?
 This is my drede, and ye, my brethren tweie,
 Alsoileth me this question I preie.

Justinus, which that hated his folie,
 Answerd anon right in his japerie, 9530
 And for he wold his longe tale abrege
 He wolde non auctoritee allege,
 But sayde, Sire, so ther be non obstacle
 Other than this, God of his hie miracle,
 And of his mercy, may so for you werche, 9535
 That er ye have your rights of holy cherche
 Ye may repent of wedded mannes lif,
 In which ye sain ther is no wo ne strif;
 And elles God forbede but if he sent
 A wedded man his grace him to repent 9540
 Wel often, rather than a single man:
 And therfore, Sire, the best rede that I can,
 Despeire you not, but haveth in memorie
 Paraventure she may be your Purgatorie;
 She may be Goddes miene and Goddes whippe, 9545
 Than shal your soule up unto heaven skippe
 Swifter than doth an arow of a bow.
 I hope to God hereafter ye shal know
 That ther n'is non so gret felicitee
 In mariage, ne never more shall be, 9550

That you shal let of your salvation,
 So that ye use, as skill is and reson,
 The lustes of your wif attemprely,
 And that ye plesse hire nat to amorously,
 And that ye kepe you eke from other sinne. 9555
 My Tale is don, for my wit is but thinne.
 Beth not agast hereof, my brother dere,
 But let us waden out of this matere.
 The Wif of Bathe, if ye han understond,
 Of mariage, which ye now han in hond, 9560
 Declared hath ful wel in litel space.
 Fareth now wel, God have you in his grace!

And with this word this Justine and his brother
 Han take hir leve, and eche of hem of other.
 And whan they saw that it must nedes be, 9565
 They wroughten so by sleighte and wise tretce
 That she this maiden, which that Maius hight,
 As hastily as ever that she might,
 Shal wedded be unto this January.
 I trow it were to longe you to tary 9570
 If I you told of every script and bond
 By which that she was feoffed in his lond,
 Or for to rekken of hire rich array.
 But, finally, ycomen is the day
 That to the chirche bothe ben they went 9575
 For to receive the holy sacrament.
 Forth cometh the preeft, with stole about his nekke,
 And bade hire be like Sara and Rebekke

In wisdom and in trouthe of mariage;
 And sayd his orisons, as is usage, 9580
 And crouched hem, and bade God shuld hem blesse,
 And made all fiker ynow with holinesse.

Thus ben they wedded with solempnitee;
 And at the fesse sitteth he and she,
 With other worthy folk, upon the deis. 9585
 Al ful of joye and blisse is the paleis,
 And ful of instruments, and of vitaille
 The moste deinteous of all Itaille.
 Beforn hem stood swiche instruments of soun
 That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion, 9590
 Ne maden never swiche a melodie:
 At every cours in came loude minstrelcie,
 That never Joab tromped for to here,
 Ne he Theodomas yet half so clere
 At Thebes whan the citee was in doute. 9595
 Bacchus the win hem skinketh all aboute,
 And Venus laugheth upon every wight,
 (For January was become hire knight,
 And wolde both assaien his corage
 In libertee and eke in mariage) 9600

¶. 9594. *Ne be Theodomas*] This person is mentioned again as a famous trumpeter in the *H. of F.* iii. 156, but upon what authority I really do not know. I should suspect that our Author met with him and the anecdote alluded to in some romantick history of Thebes.----*He* is prefixed to proper names emphatically, according to the Saxon usage. See before, ver. 9242, *him* Holofernes; ver. 9247, *him* Mardochee; and below, ver. 9608;

Of hire Philologie and *him* Mercurie.

And with hire firebrond in hire hond aboute
Danceth before the bride and all the route.

And certainly I dare right wel say this,
Ymeneus, that god of Wedding is,
Saw never his lif so mery a wedded man.

9605

Hold thou thy pees, thou poet Marcian,
That writest us that ilke wedding mery
Of hire Philologic and him Mercurie,
And of the songes that the Muses songe;

To smal is both thy pen and eke thy tonge
For to descriven of this mariage.

9610

Whan tendre Youth hath wedded flouping Age
Ther is swiche mirth that it may not be written:

Assaieth it yourself, than may ye witen

If that I lie or non in this matere.

9615

Maius, that sit with so benigne a chere,
Hire to behold it semed Faerie.

Queene Hester loked never with swiche an eye
On Assuere, so meke a look hath she.

I may you not devise all hire beautee;

9620

But this moch of hire beautee tell I may,

That she was, like the brighte morwe of May,
Fulfilled of all beautee and plesance.

This January is ravished in a trance

At every time he loketh in hire face;

9625

But in his herte he gan hire to manace

That he that night in armes wold hire streine

Harder than ever Paris did Heleine.

But natheles yet had he gret pitee
 That thilke night offenden hire must he, 9630
 And thought, alas! o tendre creature!
 Now wolde God ye mighten wel endure
 All my corage; it is so sharpe and kene
 I am agast ye shal it nat sustene!
 But God forbede that I did all my might! 9635
 Now wolde God that it were waxen night,
 And that the night wold lasten ever mo!
 I wold that all this peple were ago!
 And, finally, he doth all his labour,
 As he best mighte, saving his honour, 9640
 To heste hem fro the mete in subtil wise.

The time came that reson was to rise,
 And after that men dance and drinken fast,
 And spices all about the hous they cast,
 And ful of joye and blisse is every man, 9645
 All but a squier that highte Damian,
 Which carf befor the knight ful many a day:
 He was so ravisht on his Lady May,
 That for the veray peine he was nie wood;
 Almost he swelt, and swooned ther he stood: 9650
 So fore hath Venus hurt him with hire brond
 As that she bare it dancing in hire hond;

v. 9652. *As that she bare it*] As this line is not only in all the best mss. but also in edit. Ca. 2, it seems very extraordinary that the later editions should have exchanged it for the following;

So fresh she was, and therto so licand.

And to his bed he went him hastily :
 No more of him as at this time speke I,
 But ther I let him wepe ynow and plaine 9655
 Til freshe May wol rewen on his peine.

O perilous fire that in the bedstrow bredeth!
 O famuler so that his service bedeth!
 O servant traitour, false of holy hewe,
 Like to the nedder in bosom slie untrewē, 9660
 God shelde us alle from your acquaintance!
 O January ! drunken in plesance
 Of mariage, see how thy Damian,
 Thin owen squier and thy boren man,
 Entendeth for to do thee vilanie : 9665
 God grante thee thin homly so to espie,
 For in this world n'is werse pestilence
 Than homly so all day in thy presence.

Parformed hath the sonne his arke diurne,
 No longer may the body of him sojourne 9670
 On the orifont, as in that latitude;
 Night, with his mantel that is derke and rude,
 Gan oversprede the hemisperie aboute,
 For which departed is this lusty route

v. 9658. *his service bedeth*] Proffereth; so this word is explained in another passage, ver. 16533;

Lo how this thefe coude *his service bede*!
 Ful soth it is that *sewiche profered service*
 Stinketh, as witnesen this olde wise.

See also ver. 8236.

v. 9659. *false of holy hewe*] I have added *of* from conjecture.
 See below, ver. 12355, under hewe of holiness.

Volume III.

P

Fro January, with thank on every side.
 Home to hir houses lustily they ride,
 Ther as they don hir thinges as hem left,
 And whan they saw hir time gon to rest.

9673

Sone after that this halfif January
 Wol go to bed, he wol no longer tary.
 He drinketh Ipocras, clarre, and Vernage,
 Of spices hot, to encrefen his corage;
 And many a letuarie had he ful fine,
 Swiche as the curfed monk Dan Constantine
 Hath written in his book *De Coitu*;
 To ete hem all he wolde nothing eschue:
 And to his priuee frendes thus sayd he:

9680

9685

For Goddes love, as sone as it may be,

¶. 9681. *Vernage*] *Vernaccia*, Ital. "Credo sic dictum (says
 "Skinner) quasi *Veronaccia*, ab agro *Veronensi*, in quo opti-
 "mum ex hoc genere vinum crescit." But the *Vernage* (what-
 ever may have been the reason of its name) was probably a
 wine of Crete, or of the neighbouring continent. *Froissart*, v.
 iv. c. 18; "De l'isle de Candie il leur venoit tresbonnes Mal-
 "voises et grenaches [r. *gernaches*] dont ils estoient large-
 "ment servis et confortez." Our Author in another place, ver.
 13000, 1, joins together the wines of Malvesie and *Vernage*.
Malvasia was a town upon the eastern coast of the Morea, near
 the site of the ancient Epidaurus Limera, within a small distance
 from Crete.

¶. 9684. *Dan Constantine*] *Dan* (a corruption of *Dominus*)
 was a title of honour usually given to monks, as *Dom* and *Den*
 still are in France and Spain. See below ver. 13935;

Whether shal I call you my Lord *Dan John*,
 Or *Dan Thomas*, or elles *Dan Albon*?

Dan Constantine, according to *Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt. t. i. p.*
 423, wrote about the year 1080. His works, including the treatise
 mentioned in the text, were printed at Basil 1536, fol.

Let voiden all this hous in curteis wife.
And they han don right as he wol devise. 9690

Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bride is brought a-bed as still as ston;
And whan the bed was with the preeft yblessed
Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed,
And January hath fast in armes take 9695

His freshe May, his paradis, his make.
He lulleth hire, he kisseth hire ful oft;
With thicke bristles of his berd unsoft,
Like to the skin of houndfish, sharp as brere,
(For he was shave al newe in his manere) 9700

He rubbeth hire upon hire tendre face,
And sayde thus; Alas! I mote trespace
To you my spouse, and you gretly offend,
Or time come that I wol down descend:
But natheles considereth this, (quod he) 9705

Ther n'is no werkman, whatsoever he be,
That may both werken wel and hastily:
This wol be don at leiser parfitly.

It is no force how longe that we play;
In trewe wedlock coupled be we tway; 9710

v. 9690. *And they han don*] This line has also been left out of the later editt. though it is in all the best mss. and in edit. Ca. 2. To supply its place the following line——

So hasted Januarie it must be don——
has been inserted after ver. 9691, and the four lines have been made to rhyme together by adding *some* at the end of ver. 9689;

Let voiden all this hous in curteis wife *some*.

And blessed be the yoke that we ben inne,
 For in our actes may ther be no sinne.
 A man may do no sinne with his wif,
 Ne hurt himselfen with his owen knif,
 For we have leve to play us by the lawe. 9715

Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawe,
 And than he taketh a sop in fine clarre,
 And upright in his bed than sitteth he,
 And after that he sang ful loud and clere,
 And kist his wif, and maketh wanton chere. 9720
 He was al coltish, ful of ragerie,
 And ful of jergon as a flecked pie.

The slacke skin about his necke shaketh
 While that he sang, so chanteth he and craketh.
 But God wot what that May thought in hire herte
 Whan she him saw up sitting in his sherte 9726
 In his night cap, and with his necke lene:
 She praiseth not his playing worth a bene.
 Than sayd he thus; My reste wol I take,
 Now day is come, I may no lenger wake; 9730
 And doun he layd his hed and slept til prime.
 And afterward, whan that he saw his time,
 Up riseth January, but freshe May
 Held hire in chambre til the fourthe day,
 As usage is of wives for the beste; 9735
 For every labour somtime mošte han reste,

¶ 9714. *Ne hurt himselfen*] In 'The Persones Tale' we have a contrary doctrine; "God wote a man may see himself with
 "his owen knif, and make himselfe dronken of his owen tonne."

¶ 976
 two, tuo,
 ver. 976

Or elles longe may he not endure;
 This is to say, no lives creature,
 Be it of fish, or brid, or best, or man.

Now wol I speke of woful Damian,
 That langureth for love, as ye shul here,
 Therefore I speke to him in this manere.
 I say, O fely Damian, alas!

9740

Answer to this demand as in this cas;
 How shalt thou to thy lady freshe May
 Tellen thy wo? she wol alway say nay;
 Eke if thou speke she wol thy wo bewrein:
 God be thin help! I can no better sein.

9745

This sike Damian in Venus fire
 So brenneth that he dieth for desire,
 For which he put his lif in aventure,
 No lenger might he in this wise endure,
 But prively a penner gan he borwe,
 And in a lettre wrote he all his forwe,
 In manere of a complaint or a lay,
 Unto his faire freshe Lady May,
 And in a purse of silk heng on his sherte
 He hath it put, and layd it at his herte.

9750

The mone that at none was thilke day
 That January hath wedded freshe May
 In ten of Taure was into Cancer gliden,
 So long hath Maius in hire chambre abiden,

9755

9760

¶ 9761. *In ten of Taure*] The greatest number of miss. read
two, tuo, too, or to. But the time given (*four days complete,*
 ver. 9767,) is not sufficient for the moon to pass from the 2d

P iij.

As custome is unto thise nobles alle.

A bride shal not eten in the halle

Til dayes four, or three dayes at the leste, 9763

Ypassed ben, than let hire go to feste.

The fourthe day complete fro none to none,

Whan that the highe messie was ydone,

In halle sat this January and May

As fresh as is the brighte somers day; 9770

And so besel how that this goode man

Remembred him upon this Damian,

And sayde, Seinte Marie, how may it be

That Damian entendeth not to me?

Is he ay fike? or how may this betide? 9775

His squiers, which that stoden ther beside,

Excused him because of his siknesse,

Which letted him to don his besinesse;

Non other cause mighte make him tary.

That me forthinketh, quod this January; 9780

He is a gentil squier by my trouthe,

If that he died it were gret harme and routhe:

He is as wise, discret, and as secree,

As any man I wote of his degree,

And therto manly and eke servisable, 9785

And for to ben a thrifty man right able.

degree of Taurus into Cancer. The mean daily motion of the moon being = 13. 10. 35. her motion in 4 days is = 18. 220. 42. or not quite 53 degrees; so that supposing her to set out from the 2d of Taurus, she would not, in that time, be advanced beyond the 25th degree of Gemini. If she set out from the 10th degree of Taurus (as I have corrected the text) she might properly enough be said, in four days, to be *gliden into* Cancer.

But after mete, as sone as ever I may,
 I wol myselfe visite him, and eke May,
 To don him all the comfort that I can.
 And for that word him blessed every man, 9790
 That of his bountee and his gentilleſſe
 He wolde so comforten in sikneſſe
 His squier, for it was a gentil dede.

Dame, quod this January, take good hede
 At after mete ye with your women alle, 9795
 (Whan that ye ben in chambre out of this halle)
 That all ye gon to see this Damian;
 Doth him diſpert, he is a gentil man,
 And telleth him that I wol him visite,
 Have I no thing but reſted me a lite: 9800
 And ſpede you faſte, for I wol abide
 Til that ye ſlepen faſte by my ſide.
 And with that word he gan unto him calle
 A ſquier that was maſhal of his halle,
 And told him certain thinges that he wolde. 9805

This freſhe May hath ſtreight hire way yholde,
 With all hire women, unto Damian:
 Down by his beddes ſide ſit ſhe than,
 Comforting him as goodly as ſhe may. 9810

This Damian, whan that his time he ſay, 9815
 In ſecree wiſe his purſe and eke his bill,
 In which that he ywritten had his will,
 Hath put into hire hond withouten more,
 Save that he ſiked wonder depe and fore,

tion of the
 s. 220. 42.
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 e advanced
 at from the
) the might
 nto Cancer.

And softly to hire right thus sayd he; 9815
 Mercie, and that ye nat discover me,
 For I am ded if that this thing be kid.

This purse hath she in with hire bosome hid,
 And went hire way: ye get no more of me:
 But unto January ycome is she, 9820
 That on his beddes side sate ful soft.
 He taketh hire and kisseth hire ful oft,
 And layd him down to slepe, and that anon.
 She feined hire as that she muste gon
 Ther as ye wote that every wight mot nede; 9825
 And whan she of this bill hath taken hede
 She rent it all to cloutes at the last,
 And in the privee softly it cast.

Who studieth now but faire freshe May?
 Adoun by olde January she lay, 9830
 That slepte til the cough hath him awaked.
 Anon he prayd hire stripen hire al naked,
 He wolde of hire, he said, have som plesance,
 And said hire clothes did him encombrance.
 And she obeieth him, be hire lese or loth. 9835
 But lest that precious folk be with me wroth,
 How that he wrought I dare nat to you tell,
 Or wheder hire thought it paradis or hell:
 But ther I let hem werken in hir wise
 Til evensong rang, and that they must arise. 9840

Were it by destinee or aventure,
 Were it by influence or by nature,

Or constellation, that in swiche estat
 The heven stood at that time fortunat,
 As for to put a bill of Venus werkes 9845
 (For alle thing hath time, as sayn thise clerkes)
 To any woman for to get hire love,
 I cannot fay, but grete God above,
 That knoweth that non act is causeles,
 He deme of all, for I wol hold my pees. 9850
 But soth is this, how that this freshe May
 Hath taken swiche impressioun that day
 Of pitee on this like Damian,
 That fro hire herte she ne driven can
 The remembrance for to don him ese. 9855
 Certain (thought she) whom that this thing displese
 I rekke not, for here I him assure
 To love him best of any creature,
 Though he no more hadde than his sherte.
 Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte : 9860
 Here may ye seen how excellent franchise
 In women is whan they hem narwe avise.
 Som tyraunt is, as ther ben many on,
 That hath an herte as hard as any ston,
 Which wold han lette him sterven in the place 9865
 Wel rather than han granted him hire grace,
 And hem rejoycen in hir cruel pride,
 And rekken not to ben an homicide.
 This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
 Right of hire hond a lettre maketh she, 9870

In which she granteth him hire veray grace :
 Ther lacked nought but only day and place
 Wher that she might unto his lust suffice ;
 For it shal be right as he wol devise.

And whan she saw hire time upon a day 9875
 To visiten this Damian goth this May,
 And sotilly this lettre doun she threst
 Under his pilwe, rede it if him lest.
 She taketh him by the hond, and hard him twist,
 So secretly that no wight of it wist, 9880
 And bade him ben all hol ; and forth she went
 To January whan he for hire sent.

Up riseth Damian the nexte morwe,
 Al passed was his siknesse and his forwe.
 He kembeth him, he proineth him and piketh, 9885
 He doth all that his lady lust and liketh ;
 And eke to January he goth as lowe
 As ever did a dogge for the bowe.
 He is so plesant unto every man,
 (For craft is all, who so that don it can) 9890
 That every wight is fain to speke him good ;
 And fully in his ladies grace he stood.

Thus let I Damian about his nede,
 And in my Tale forth I wol procede.

Som clerkes holden that felicitee 9895
 Stant in delit, and therfore certain he,

¶. 9888. *a dogge for the bowe*] A dog used in shooting. See before, ver. 6951.

This noble January, with all his might,
 In honest wise as longeth to a knight,
 Shope him to liven ful deliciously.
 His housfing, his array, as honestly 9900
 To his degree was maked as a kinges.
 Amonges other of his honest thinges
 He had a gardin walled all with ston,
 So fayre a gardin wote I no wher non;
 For out of doute I veraily suppose 9905
 That he that wrote The Romant of the Rose
 Ne coude of it the beautee wel devise;
 Ne Priapus ne mighte not suffise,
 Though he be god of Gardins, for to tell
 The beautee of the gardin, and the well, 9910
 That stood under a laurer alway grene :
 Ful often time he Pluto and his quene
 Proserpina and alle hir Faerie,
 Disporten hem and maken melodie
 About that well, and daunced, as men told. 9915
 This noble knight, this January the old,
 Swiche deintee hath in it to walke and pley,
 That he wol suffre no wight bere the key
 Sauf he himself, for of the smal wiket
 He bare alway of silver a cliket, 9920
 With which whan that him list he it unshette;
 And whan that he wold pay his wives dette
 In somer seson thider wold he go,
 And May his wif, and no wight but they two;

And thinges which that were not don a-bedde 9923
He in the gardin parfourned hem, and spedde.

And in this wise many a mery day
Lived this January and freshe May:
But worldly joye may not alway endure
To January ne to no creature. 9930

O soden hap, o thou Fortune unstable!
Like to the scorpion so deceivable,
That flatrest with thy hed whan thou wolt sting;
Thy tayl is deth thurgh thin enveniming.
O brotel joye! o swete poyson queinte! 9935
O monstre! that so sotilly canst peinte
Thy giftes under hewe of stedfastnesse,
That thou deceivest bothe more and lesse,
Why hast thou January thus deceived,
That haddest him for thy ful frend received? 9940
And now thou hast beraft him both his eyen,
For sorwe of which desireth he to dyen.

Alas! this noble January free,
Amidde his lust and his prosperitee,
Is waxen blind, and that al sodenly. 9945
He wepeth and he wailleth pitously,
And therewithall the fire of jalousie-
(Lest that his wif shuld fall in som folie)
So brent his herte that he wolde fain
That som man had both him and hire yslain; 9950
For nother after his deth ne in his lif
Ne wold he that she were no loye ne wif,

9925 But ever live as a widewe in clothes blake,
 Sole as the turtle that hath lost hire make.
 But at the last, after a moneth or tway 9955
 His forwe gan asswagen, soth to say;
 For whan he wist it might non other be
 9930 He patiently toke his adversitee;
 Save out of doute he ne may nat forgon
 That he n'as jalous ever more in on; 9960
 Which jalousie it was so outrageous,
 That neither in halle, ne in non other hous,
 9935 Ne in non other place never the mo,
 He n'olde suffre hire for to ride or go
 But if that he had honde on hire alway; 9965
 For which ful often wepeth freshe May,
 That loveth Damian so brenningly,
 9940 That she moste either dien fodenly
 Or elles she moste han him as hire lest:
 She waited whan hire herte wold to-brest. 9970

Upon that oþer side Damian
 Becomen is the forwefullest man
 9945 That ever was, for neither night ne day
 Ne might he speke a word to freshe May,
 As to his purpos, of no swiche matere, 9975
 But if that January must it here,
 That had an hand upon hire evermo:
 But natheles by writing to and fro,

& 9967. *so brenningly*] Vulg. *benignly*. Mss. *Ask.* 1, 2, read *ferrently*; which is probably a gloss for the true word, *brenningly*. See before, ver. 1566. Mss. *A.* reads *benyngly*.

Volume III.

Q

And privee signes, wist he what she ment,
And she knew eke the fin of his entent. 9980

O January! what might it thee availe
Though thou might seen as fer as shippes saile?
For as good is blind to deceived be
As be deceived whan a man may see.
Lo Argus, which that had an hundred eyen, 9985
For all that ever he coude pore or prien,
Yet was he blent, and, God wot, so ben mo,
That wenen wisly that it be not so.
Passe over is an ese; I say no more.

This freshe May, of which I spake of yore, 9990
In warm wex hath enprented the cliket
That January bare of the smal wiket,
By which into his gardin oft he went,
And Damian, that knew all hire entent,
The cliket contrefeted prively: 9995
Ther n'is no more to say, but hastily
Som wonder by this cliket shal betide,
Which ye shul heren if ye wol abide.

O noble Ovide! soth sayest thou, God wote,
What sleight is it, if Love be long and hote, 10000

¶ 9983. *For as good is*] The reading in the text is from *ms. A*; *ms. A* reads thus;

For as good is al blind deceived be.
I should not dislike

For as good is al blind deceived to be
As be deceived whan a man may see.

Ver. 10000. *What sleight is it*] These lines are a little different in *ms. C*, *I*, *HA*.

What sleighte is it, though it be long and hote,
That Love shal find it out in som manere?

That he n'll find it out in som manere?
 By Pyramus and Thisbe may men lere;
 Though they were kept ful long and streit over all,
 They ben accorded, rowning thurgh a wall,
 Ther no wight coude han founden swiche a sleighte.
 But now to purpos. Er that daies eichte. 10006
 Were passed of the month of Juil, befill
 That January hath caught so gret a will,
 Thurgh egging of his wif, him for to play
 In his gardin, and no wight but they tway, 10010
 That in a morwe unto this May said he,
 Rise up, my wif, my love, my lady free!
 The turtles vois is herd, myn owen swete!
 The winter is gon, with all his raines wete.
 Come forth now with thin eyen columbine; 10015
 Wel fairer ben thy brests than ony wine.
 The gardin is enclosed all aboute;
 Come forth, my white spouse, for out of doute
 Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wif!
 No spot in thee n'as never in all thy lif. 10020
 Come forth, and let us taken our disport;
 I chese thee for my wif and my comfort.

Swiche olde lewed wordes used he.
 On Damian a signe made she,
 That he shuld go before with his cliket. 10025
 This Damian hath opened the wicket,
 And in he stert, and that in swiche manere
 That no wight might him see neyther yhere,

Q ij

And still he sit under a bush. Anon
This January, as blind as is a ston, 10030
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
Into this freshe gardin is ago,
And clapped to the wicket sodenly.

Now wif, quod he, here n'is but thou and I,
That art the creature that I best love ; 10035
For by that Lord that sit in heven above
I hadde lever dien on a knif
Than thee offenden, dere trewe wif.
For Goddes sake thinke how I thee chees,
Not for no covetise donteles, 10040
But only for the love I had to thee.
And though that I be old and may not see,
Beth to me trewe, and I wol tell you why ;
Certes three thinges shal ye win therby ;
First love of Crist, and to yourself honour, 10045
And all min heritage, toun and tour ;
I yeve it you, maketh chartres as you lest :
This shal be don to-morwe er sonne rest,
So wisly God my soule bring to blisse :
I pray you on this covenant ye me kisse. 10050
And though that I be jalous wite me nought ;
Ye ben so depe enprented in my thought,
That whan that I consider your beautee,
And therwithall the unlikely elde of me,
I may not certes, though I shulde die, 10055
Forbere to ben out of your compaignie

For veray love; this is withouten doute:
Now kisse me, wif, and let us rome aboute.

This freshe May, whan she thise wordes herd,
Benignely to January answerd, 10060

But first and forward she began to wepe:

I have, quod she, a soule for to kepe

As wel as ye, and also min honour,

And of my wifhood, thilke tendre flour

Which that I have assured in your hond, 10065

Whan that the preest to you my body bond,

Wherefore I wol answer in this manere,

With leve of you, myn owen lord so dere.

I pray to God that never daw that day

That I ne sterue, as soule as woman may, 10070

If ever I do unto my kin that shame,

Or elles I empeire so my name

That I be false; and if I do that lakke

Do stripen me and put me in a sakke,

And in the nexte river do me drenche: 10075

I am a gentil woman and no wenche.

Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewes,

And women han represe of you ay newe.

Ye con non other daliance, I leve,

But speke to us as of untrust and reprove. 10080

And with that word she saw wher Damian

Sat in the bush, and conghen she began;

And with hire finger a signe made she

That Damian shuld climbe up on a tre

That charged was with fruit, and up he went; 10085
 For veraily he knew all hire entent,
 And every signe that she coude make,
 Wel bet than January her owen make;
 For in a lettre she had told him all
 Of this matere, how that he werken shall. 10090
 And thus I let him sitting in the pery,
 And January and May roming ful mery.

Bright was the day, and blew the firmament;
 Phebus of gold his stremes down hath sent
 To gladen every flour with his warmnesse; 10095
 He was that time in Geminis I gesse,
 But litel fro his declination
 Of Cancer, Joves exaltation.
 And so befell in that bright morwe tide
 That in the gardin, on the ferther side, 10100
 Pluto that is the King of Faerie,
 And many a ladie in his compaignie
 Folwing his wif, the Quene Proserpina,
 Which that he ravished out of Ethna,
 While that she gadred floures in the mede, 10105
 (In Claudian ye may the story rede,
 How that hire in his grisely carte he sette)
 'This King of Faerie adoun him sette

¶ 10104. *Which that he ravished out of Ethna*] So ms. A.
 In some other ms. *Ethna*, by a manifest errour of the copist,
 has been changed into *Proserpina*. The passage being thus made
 nonsense, other transcribers left out the line, and substituted
 this in its stead;

Eche after other, right as any line.

Upon a benche of turves freshe and grene,
And right anon thus said he to his quene: 10110

My wif, quod he, ther may no wight say nay,
The experience so preveth it every day,
The trefon which that woman doth to man :
Ten hundred thousand stories tell I can
Notable of your untrouth and brotelnesse. 10115

O Salomon! richest of all richeffe,
Fulfilled of sapience and worldly glorie,
Ful worthy ben thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reson can.
Thus praiseth he the bountee yet of man; 10120

Among a thousand men yet fond I on,
But of all women fond I never non.
Thus saith this king, that knewe your wikkednesse :
And Jesus, *filius* Sirach, as I gesse,
He speket of you but selden reverence. 10125

A wilde fire, a corrupt pestilence,
So fall upon your bodies yet to-night.
Ne see ye not this honourable knight?
Because, alas! that he is blind and old
His owen man shal make him cokewold : 10130

Lo wher he sit, the lechour, in the tree.
Now wol I graunten of my majestee
Unto this olde blinde worthy knight
That he shal have again his eyen sight

¶ 10121. *Among a thousand*] *Ecclesiastes* vii. 28. This argument is treated in much the same manner in Melibeus.

085

0090

0095

10100

10105

So ms. A.
the copist,
thus made
substituted

Whan that his wif wol don him vilanie, IOI35
 Than shal he knowen all hire harlotrie,
 Both in represe of hire and other mo.

Ye, Sire, quod Proserpine, and wol ye so?
 Now by my modre Ceres soule I swere
 That I shal yeve hire suffisant answere, IOI40
 And alle women after for hire sake,
 That though they ben in any gilt ytake
 With face bold they shul hemselfe excuse,
 And bere hem down that wolden hem accuse :
 For lacke of answere non of us shul dien. IOI45
 Al had ye seen a thing with both your eyen,
 Yet shul we se visage it hardely,
 And wepe, and swere, and chiden, subtilly,
 That ye shul ben as lewed as ben gees.

What rekketh me of your auctoritees? IOI50
 I wote wel that this Jewe, this Salomon,
 Fond of us women fooles many on :
 But though that he ne fond no good woman,
 Ther hath yfonden many an other man
 Women ful good, and trewe and vertuous, IOI55
 Witnesse on hem that dwelte in Cristes hous;
 With martyrdom they preved hir constance.
 The Romain gestes maken remembrance

¶. IOI58. *The Romain gestes*] He means the collection of stories called *Gesta Romanorum*, of which I once thought to say a few words here, in order to recommend it to a little more attention than it has hitherto met with from those who have written upon the poetical inventions of the middle ages; but as many of the stories in that collection are taken from a treatise of Petrus Alphonsus, *De Clericali Disciplina*, (an older and

Of many a veray trewe wif also.

But, Sire, ne be not wroth al be it so, 10160

Though that he said he fond no good woman;

I pray you take the sentence of the man :

He ment thus, that in soverain bountee

N'is non but God, no, nouthur he ne she.

Ey, for the veray God that n'is but on 10165

What maken ye so moche of Salomon ?

What though he made a temple, Goddes hous ?

What though he were riche and glorious ?

So made he eke a temple of false goddes;

How might he don a thing that more forbode is ?

Parde as faire as ye his name emplastre 10171

He was a lechour and an idolastre,

And in his elde he veray God forfoke;

And if that God ne hadde (as saith the boke)

Spared him for his fathers sake, he sholde 10175

Han lost his regne rather than he wolde.

I fete nat of all the vilanie

That he of women wrote a boterflic.

I am a woman; nedes mošte I speke,

Or swell unto that time min herte breke : 10180

For sin he said that we ben jangleresses,

As ever mote I brouken hole my tresses

I shal nat sparen for no curtesie

To speke him harm that sayth us vilanie.

still more forgotten work) I shall reserve what I have to offer upon this subject till I come to The Tale of Melibeus, where Pier: Alphonso is quoted.

Dame, quod this Pluto, be no lenger wroth, 10185
 I yeve it up: but sin I swore min oth
 That I wold graunten him his sight again,
 My word shal stand, that warne I you certain:
 I am a king, it fit me not to lie.

And I, quod she, am Quene of Faerie. 10190
 Hire answere she shal han I undertake;
 Let us no more wordes of it make.
 Forsoth, quod he, I wol you not contrary.

Now let us turn again to January,
 That in the gardin with his faire May 10195
 Singeth wel merier than the popingay;
 You love I best, and shal, and other non.

So long about the alleyes is he gon,
 Til he was comen again to thilke pery
 Wher as this Damian sitteth ful mery 10200
 On high, among the freshe leves grene.

This freshe May, that is so bright and shene,
 Gan for to fike, and said, Alas, my fide!
 Now, Sire, quod she, for ought that may betide
 I mošte have of the peres that I see 10205
 Or I mošte die, so fore longeth me
 To eten of the smale peres grene;
 Help for hire love that is of heven quene.

I teil you wel a woman in my plit
 May have to fruit so gret an appetit 10210
 That she may dien but she of it have.

Alas! quod he, that I n'adde here a knave

That coude climbe: alas! alas! (quod he)
 For I am blinde. Ye, Sire, no force, quod she;
 But wold ye vouchefauf, for Goddes fake, 10215
 The pery in with your armes for to take,
 (For wel I wot that ye mistrusten me)
 Than wold I climben wel ynough, (quod she)
 So I my fote might setten on your back.

Certes, said he, therin shal be no lack, 10220
 Might I you helpen with min herte blood.

He stoupeth down, and on his back she stood,
 And caught hire by a twist; and up she goth.
 (Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wroth;
 I can nat glose; I am a rude man:) 10225

And fodenly anon this Damian
 Gan pullen up the smock, and in he throng.

And whan that Pluto saw this grete wrong
 To January he yaf again his sight,
 And made him see as wel as ever he might; 10230

¶ 10227. *Gan pullen*] After this verse the edit. (except *Cz.* 2, and *Pynf.* 1, 2,) have eight others of the lowest and most superfluous ribaldry that can well be conceived. It would be a mere loss of time to argue from the lines themselves that they were not written by Chaucer, as we have this short and decisive reason for rejecting them, that they are not found in any one ms. of authority. They are not found in mss. *A. C.* 1, *Ask.* 1, 2. *HA.* *B. C. D. G. Bod.* *α. ε. γ. δ. ι. ζ. C.* 2. *T. N. Ch.* In mss. *E. H. I. W.* either the whole Tale or that part where they might be looked for is wanting. The only tolerable ms. in which I have seen them is *F.* and there they have been added in the margin by a later hand, perhaps not older than Caxton's first edition.

And whan he thus had caught his sight again
 Ne was ther never man of thing so fain :
 But on his wif his thought was ever mo.

Up to the tree he cast his eyen two,
 And saw how Damian his wife had dressed 10235
 In swiche manere it may not ben expressed,
 But if I wolde speke uncurteisly ;
 And up he yaf a roing and a cry,
 As doth the mother whan the child shal die :
 Out ! helpe ! alas ! harow ! he gan to cry ; 10240
 O stronge lady store, what doest thou ?
 And she answered, Sire, what aileth you ?
 Have patience and reson in your minde,
 I have you holpen on both your eyen blinde.
 Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lien, 10245
 As me was taught to helpen with your eyen
 Was nothing better for to make you see
 Than strogle with a man upon a tree :
 God wot I did it in ful good entent.

Strogle ! quod he ; ye, algate in it went. 10250
 Gode yeve you both on flames deth to dien ;

¶. 10240. *Out ! helpe !*] Two lines which follow this in the common editt. are omitted for the reasons stated in the note upon ver. 10227 ; and I shall take the same liberty, upon exactly the same grounds, with four more which have been inserted in those editt. after ver. 10250.

¶. 10241. *O stronge lady store*] As all the best mss. support this reading I have not departed from it, for fear *store* should have some signification that I am not aware of. Some mss. have *floure*, ms. G. *houre*, edit. Ca. 2, *lore* ; *bôra*, *meretrix*, *island*.

He swived thee, I saw it with min eyen,
And elles be I honged by the halfe.

Than is, quod she, my medicine al false;
For certainly if that ye mighten see 10255
Ye wold not say thise wordes unto me.

Ye have som glimfing, and no parfit fight.

I see, quod he, as wel as ever I might
(Thanked be God) with both min eyen two,
And by my feith me thought he did thee so. 10260

Ye mase, ye mafen, good Sire, quod she;
This thank have I for I have made you see:
Alas! quod she, that ever I was so kind.

Now Dame, quod he, let al passe out of mind:
Come down, my lese, and if I have missaid 10265
God helpe me so as I am evil appaid:
But by my fadres soule I wende have sein
How that this Damian had by thee lein,
And that thy smock had lein upon his brest.

Ye, Sire, quod she, ye may wene as you lest: 10270
But, Sire, a man that waketh of his slepe
He may not sodenly wel taken kepe
Upon a thing, ne seen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed veraily:
Right so a man that long hath blind ybe 10275
He may not sodenly so wel ysee,

¶ 10261. *Ye mase, ye mafen*] The final *n* has been added without authority, and unnecessarily. This line is very oddly written in *msl. A*. 1, 2;

Ya may ya may ya quod she.

Volume III.

R

First whan his sight is newe comen agein,
 As he that hath a day or two ylein.
 Til that your sight yfateled be a while
 Ther may ful many a fighte you begile. 10280
 Beware, I pray you, for by heven King
 Ful many a man weneth to see a thing,
 And it is all another than it semeth :
 He which that misconceiveth oft misdremeth.
 And with that word she lep down fro the tree. 10285
 This January who is glad but he ?
 He kisseth hire and clippeth hire ful oft,
 And on hire wombe he stroketh hire ful soft,
 And to his paleis home he hath hire lad.
 Now, goode men, I pray you to be glad. 10290
 Thus endeth here my Tale of Januarie;
 God blesse us, and his moder Seinte Marie! 10292

THE SQUIERES PROLOGUE.

By Goddes mercy, sayde oure Hoste tho,
 Now swiche a wif I preie God kepe me fro.
 Lo, swiche sleighes and subtilitees 10295
 In women ben ; for ay as besy as bees

v. 10293.] It has been said in the *Discourse*, &c. §. 23. that this new Prologue has been prefixed to The Squieres Tale upon the authority of the best mss. They are as follows; A. C. 1, A. B. 1, 2, H. A. D. Bod. a. γ. δ. The concurrence of the first five mss. would alone have been more than sufficient to outweigh the authorities in favour of the other Prologue. Ed. C. 2, (though it has not this Prologue) agrees with these mss. in placing The Squieres Tale after The Marchantes.

Ben they us sely men for to deceive,
And from a sothe wol they ever weive :
By this Marchantes Tale it preveth wel.

But natheles, as trewe as any slele, 10300

I have a wif, though that she poure be,
But of hire tonge a labbing shrewe is she ;

And yet she hath an hepe of vices mo.

Therof no force ; let all swiche thinges go.

But wete ye what ? in conseil be it seyde, 10305

Mereweth fore I am unto hire teyde ;

For and I shulde rekene every vice

Which that she hath, ywis I were to nice ;

And cause why, it shulde reported be

And told to hire of som of this compaignie, 10310

(Of whom it nedeth not for to declare,

Sin women connen utter swiche chaffare)

And eke my wit sufficeth not therto

To tellen all ; wherfore my Tale is do.

Squier, come ner, if it youre wille be, 10315

And say somwhat of love, for certes ye

Connen theron as moche as any man.

Nay, Sire, quod he, but swiche thing as I can

¶ 10298. *weive*] This verb is generally used transitively, to wave, to relinquish, a thing ; but it has also a neuter signification, to depart, as here. See also *ver.* 4728, 9357.

¶ 10312. *Sin women connen utter*] *Mf. A.* reads *soute*, but others have *utter*, which I believe is right, though I confess that I do not clearly understand the passage. The phrase has occurred before, *ver.* 6103 ;

With danger *uttren* we all our *chaffare*.

With hertly wille, for I wol not rebelle
 Agein your lust, a Tale wol I telle. 10320
 Have me excused if I speke amis :
 My wille is good ; and lo, my Tale is this.

THE SQUIERES TALE.

AT Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie,
 Ther dwelt a king that werreied Ruffie,
 Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man. 10325
 This noble king was cleped Cambuscan,
 Which in his time was of so gret renoun
 That ther n'as no wher in no regioun
 So excellent a lord in alle thing ;
 Him lacked nought that longeth to a king, 10330
 As of the secte of which that he was borne.
 He kept his lay to which he was yfworne,
 And therto he was hardy, wise, and riche,
 And pitous and just, and alway yliche,
 Trewe of his word, benigne and honourable, 10335
 Of his corage as any centre stable,
 Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous,
 As any bachelor of all his hous.
 A faire person he was and fortunate,
 And kept alway so wel real estat 10340

The Squieres Tale] The King of Araby sendith to Cambuscan King of Sarra a horse and a sword of rare qualite, and to his daughter Canace a glasse and a ring, by the virtue whereof the understandeth the language of all fowles. Much of this Tale is either lost or else never finished by Chaucer. *Urry.*

That ther n'as no wher swiche another man.

10320

This noble king, this Tartre Cambuscan,
Hadde two sones by Elfeta his wif,
Of which the eldest sone highte Algarfis,
That other was ycleped Camballo.

10345

A doughter had this worthy king also,
That yongest was, and highte Canace:

But for to tellen you all hire beautee
It lith not in my tonge ne in my conning;

I dare not undertake so high a thing:

10350

Min English eke is unsufficient;

It muste ben a rethor excellent,

That coude his colours longing for that art,

If he shuld hire descriven any part:

I am non swiche; I mote speke as I can.

10355

And so besel that whan this Cambuscan

Hath twenty winter borne his diademe,

As he was wont fro yere to yere I deme,

He let the feste of his nativitee

Don crien thurghout Sarra his citee

10360

The last idus of March after the yere.

Phebus the sonne ful jolif was and clere,

For he was nigh his exaltation

In Martes face, and in his mansion

10340

¶ 10344. *Of which the eldest sone*] I have added *sone* for the sake of the metre.

¶ 10364. *and in his mansion*] *His* refers to Mars, and not to the sun. "Aries est l'exaltation du Soleil ou 19 degre. et si est "Aries maison de Mars," *Calend. des Berg.* sign. l. ult. Leo

In Aries, the colerike hote signe : 10365
 Ful lusty, was the wether and benigne,
 For which the soules again the sonne shene :
 What for the feson and the yonge grene
 Ful loude songen hir affectiouns :
 Hem semed han gotten hem protecciouns 10370
 Against the swerd of winter kene and cold.

This Cambuscan, of which I have you told,
 In real vestiments, sit on his deis
 With diademe, ful high in his paleis,
 And holt his feste so solempne and so riche 10375
 That in this world ne was ther non it liche,
 Of which if I shal tellen all the array
 Than wold it occupie a somers day ;
 And eke it nedeth not for to devise
 At every cours the order of hir service : 10380
 I wol not tellen of hir strange sewes,
 Ne of hir swannes ne hir heronsewes :

was the *manfion* of the sun, *ibid.* sign. K. 1. Aries is there also said to be *signe chault et sec*.

¶ 10381. *strange sewes*] A sewer was an officer so called from his placing the dithes upon the table. *Affour*, Fr. from *affoir*, to place. In the establishment of the king's household there are still four Gentlemen Sewers. *Sewes* here seem to signify dithes, from the same original, as *assiete*, in Fr. still signifies a little dith or plate. See *Gower, Conf. Amant.* fol. 115, b.;

The fleshie, whan it was so to-hewe,
 She taketh, and maketh therof a *sewe*.—

¶ 10382. *heronsewes*] *Heronceaux*, Fr. according to the Glossary. At the intronization of Archbishop Nevil, 6 Edw. IV. there were *heronsewes* iiii C. *I. el. Collect.* vol. vi. 2. At another feast in 1530 we read of 16 *bearonsewes*, every one 12d. *Peck's D. C.* vol. ii. 12.

10363

Eke in that lond, as tellen knightes old,
 Ther is som mete that is ful deintee hold,
 That in this lond men recche of it ful smal: 10385
 Ther n'is no man that may reporten al.
 I wol not tarien you, for it is prime,
 And for it is no fruit, but losse of time:
 Unto my purpose I wol have recours.

10370

told,

And so befell that after the thridde cours, 10390
 While that this king sit thus in his nobley,
 Herking his ministralles hir thinges pley,
 Before him at his bord deliciously,
 In at the halle dore al sodenly

10375

e

e

Ther came a knight upon a stede of bras, 10395
 And in his hond a brod mirrour of glas;
 Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
 And by his side a naked sward hanging;
 And up he rideth to the highe bord.

10380

is there also

In all the halle ne was ther spoke a word 10400
 For mervaille of this knight; him to behold
 Ful befily they waiten yong and old.

o called from
 from *affair*,
 old there are
 gnify dithes,
 s a little dish

This strange knight that come thus sodenly,
 Al armed save his hed ful richely,
 Salueth king and queene, and lordes alle, 10405
 By order as they saten in the halle,
 With so high reverence and observance,
 As wel in speche as in his contenance,
 That Gawain with his olde curtesie,
 Though he were come agen out of Faerie, 10410

ding to the
 1, 6 Edw. IV.
 2. At ano-
 very one 12d.

Ne coude him not amenden with a word:
 And after this beforne the highe bord
 He with a manly vois sayd his message,
 After the forme used in his langage,
 Withouten vice of sillable or of letter: IO415
 And for his tale shulde seme the better,
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
 As techeth art of speche hem that it lere.
 Al be it that I cannot sounne his stile,
 Ne cannot climben over so high a stile, IO420
 Yet say I this, as to comun entent,
 Thus much amounteth all that ever he ment,
 If it so be that I have it in mind.

He sayd, The King of Arabie and of inde,
 My liege Lord, on this solempne day, IO425
 Salueth you as he best can and may,
 And sendeth you, in honour of your feste,
 By me, that am al redy at your heste,
 This stede of bras, that esily and wel
 Can in the space of a day naturel IO430
 (This is to sayn, in four-and-twenty houres)
 Wher so you list, in drought or elles shoures,
 Beren your body into every place
 To which your herte willeth for to pace,
 Withouten wemme of you thurgh soule or faire;
 Or if you list to fleen as high in the aire IO436
 As doth an egle, whan him list to fore,
 This same stede shal bere you evermore,

Withouten harme, till ye be ther you lest,
 (Though that ye slepen on his back or rest) 10440
 And turne again with writhing of a pin;
 He that it wrought he coude many a gin;
 He waited many a constellation
 Or he had don this operation,

And knew ful many a fele and many a bond. 10445

This mirrour eke that I have in min hond
 Hath swiche a might that men may in it see
 Whan ther shal falle ony adversitee

Unto your regne or to yourself also,
 And openly who is your frend or fo; 10450
 And over all this, if any lady bright

Hath set hire herte on any maner wight,
 If he be false she shal his trefon see,
 His newe love, and all his subtiltee,
 So openly that ther shal nothing hide. 10455

Wherefore again this lusty somer tide
 This mirrour and this ring, that ye may se,
 He hath sent to my Lady Canace,
 Your excellent doughter that is here.

The vertue of this ring, if ye wol here, 10460
 Is this, that if hire list it for to were
 Upon hire thombe, or in hire purse it bere,
 Ther is no foule that fleeth under heven
 That she ne shal wel understond his steven,
 And know his mening openly and plaine, 10465
 And answer him in his langage again;

And every gras that groweth upon rote
 She shal eke know, and whom it wol do bote,
 All be his woundes never so depe and wide. 10469

This naked fwerd, that hangeth by my side,
 Swiche vertue hath, that what man that it smite,
 Thurghout his armure it wol kerve and bite,
 Were it as thicke as is a braunched oke;
 And what man that is wounded with the stroke
 Shal never be hole, til that you list of grace 10475
 To stroken him with the platte in thilke place
 Ther he is hurt; this is as much to sain,
 Ye moten with the platte fwerd again
 Stroken him in the wound and it wol close.
 This is the veray soth withouten glose: 10480
 It failleth not while it is in your hold.

And whan this knight hath thus his tale told
 He rideth out of halle, and down he light.
 His stede, which that shone as sonne bright,
 Stant in the court as stille as any ston. 10485
 This knight is to his chambre ladde anon,
 And is unarmed, and to the mete yfette.
 Thise presents ben ful richelich yfette,
 This is to sain, the fwerd and the mirrour,
 And borne anon into the highe tour 10490
 With certain officers ordained therfore;
 And unto Canace the ring is bore
 Solempnely, ther she sat at the table.
 But likerly, withouten any fable,

The hors of bras, that may not be remued, IC495
 It stant as it were to the ground yglued :
 Ther may no man out of the place it drive
 For non engine of windas or polive :
 And cause why, for they con not the craft,
 And therfore in the place they han it last IC500
 Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
 To voiden him, as ye shal after here.

Gret was the prees that swarmed to and fro
 To gauren on this hors that stondeth so ;
 For it so high was, and so brod and long, IC505
 So wel proportioned for to be strong,
 Right as it were a stede of Lumbardie,
 Therwith so horfly and so quik of eye
 As it a gentil Poileis courser were ;
 For certes fro his tayl unto his ere IC510
 Nature ne art ne coud him not amend
 In no degree, as all the peple wend.

But evermore hir moste wonder was
 How that it coude gon and was of bras :

v. 10509. *a gentil Poileis courser*] A horse of Apulia, which
 in old French was usually called *Poille*. The horses of that
 country were much esteemed. *Mf. Bod.* James VI. 142. Richard
 Archbishop of Armagh, in the 14th century, says in praise of
 our St. Thomas, "Quod nec mulus Hispaniæ, nec dextrarius
 "Apuliæ, nec repedo Æthiopiæ, nec elephantus Asiæ, nec ca-
 "melus Syriæ, hoc a sino nostra Angliæ aptior sine audentior in-
 "venitur ad prælia." He had before informed his audience
 that "Thomas Anglice idem est quod Thom. Asinus." There
 is a patent in *Rymer*, 2 Edw. II, "De dextrariis in Lumbardiâ
 "emendis."

It was of Faerie, as the peple semed: 10515

Diverse folk diversely han demed:

As many heds as many wittes ben.

They murmured as doth a swarme of been,

And maden skilles after hir fantasies,

Reherfing of the olde poetries, 10520

And sayd it was ylike the Pegasee,

The hors that hadde winges for to flee,

Or elles it was the Grekes hors Sinon,

That broughte Troye to destruction,

As men moun in thise olde gestes rede. 10525

Min herte (quod on) is evermore in drede;

I trow som men of armes ben therin,

That shapen hem this citee for to win:

It were right good that al swiche thing were know.

Another rowned to his felaw low, 10530

And sayd, He lieth, for it is rather like

An apparence ymade by som magike,

As jogelours plaien at thise festes grete.

Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,

As lewed peple demen comunly 10535

Of thinges that ben made more subtilly

Than they can in hir lewednesse comprehende:

They demen gladly to the badder ende.

And som of hem wondred on the mirrour

That born was up in to the maister tour, 10540

¶. 10523. *the Grekes hors Sinon*] This is rather an awkward expression for—*the horse of Sinon the Greek*, or, as we might say, *Sinon the Greek's horse*.

10513

How men mighte in it swiche thinges see.

Another answerd and sayd, It might wel be
Naturally by compositions

Of angles and of slie reflections;

And saide that in Rome was swiche on.

10545

10520

They speke of Albazen and Vitellon,

And Aristotle, that writen in hir lives

Of queinte mirroures and of prospectives,

As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.

10523

And other folk han wondred on the swerd 10530

That wolde percen thurghout every thing;

And fell in speche of Telephus the king,

And of Achilles for his queiute spere,

For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,

Right in swiche wise as men may with the swerd

10530

Of which right now ye have yourselven herd. 10536

They speken of fondry harding of metall,

And speken of medicines therwithall,

And how and whan it shuld yharded be,

Which is unknow algates unto me.

10560

10535

Tho speken they of Canacees ring,

And saiden all that swiche a wonder thing

ψ. 10546. *Albazen and Vitellon*] *Albazeni et Vitellonis Optice*
are extant, printed at Basil 1572. The first is supposed by his
editor to have lived about *A. D.* 1100, and the second to *A. D.*
1270.

10540

ψ. 10561. *Canacees*] This word should perhaps have had an
accent on the first *e*----*Canacées*, to shew that it is to be pro-
nounced as of four syllables. So also below, ver. 10945;

And swouneth est in *Canacees* barme.

Volume III.

S

Of craft of ringes herd they never non,
 Save that he Moises and King Salomon
 Hadden a name of conning in swiche art. 10565
 Thus sain the peple, and drawen hem apart.

But natheles som saiden that it was
 Wonder to maken of ferne ashen glas,
 And yet is glas nought like ashen of ferne;
 But for they han yknowen it so ferne, 10570
 Therfore cefeth hir jangling and hir wonder.

As fore wondren som on cause of thonder,
 On ebbe and flood, on gossomer and on mist,
 And on all thing til that the cause is wist.

Thus janglen they, and demen and devise, 10575
 Til that the king gan fro his bord arise.

Phebus hath left the angle meridional,
 And yet ascending was the beste real,
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian,
 Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambuscan, 10580
 Rose from his bord, ther as he sat ful hie:
 Beforen him goth the loude minstralcie,
 'Til he come to his chambre of parements,
 Ther as they founden divers instruments,
 That it is like an heven for to here. 10585

Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,

*. 10570. *yknown it so ferne*] Known it so before. I take *ferne* to be a corruption of *forne*, (*foran*, Sax.) So in *Tro.* ver. 1176, *ferne yere* seems to signify former years. In *P.P.* fol. So, b. *fernt ago* is used as long ago.

†. 10583. *chambre of parements*] *Chambre de parment* is translated by Cotgrave the presence chamber, and *Lit de par-*

For in the Fish hir lady fat ful hie,
And loketh on hem with a frendly eye.

This noble king is set upon his trone,
This straunge knight is set to him ful sone, 10590
And on the daunce he goth with Canace.

Here is the revell and the jolitee
That is not able a dull man to devise :
He must han knowen Love and his servise,
And ben a festlich man, as fresh as May, 10595
That shulde you devisen swiche array.

Who coude tellen you the forme of daunces
So uncouth, and so freshe contenaunces,
Swiche subtil lokings and dissimulings,
For dred of jalous mennes apperceivings? 10600
No man but Launcelot, and he is ded ;
Therfore I passe over all this lustyhed ;
I say no more, but in this jolineffe
I lete hem til men to the souper hem dresse.

The steward bit the spices for to hie, 10605
And eke the win, in all this melodie ;

ment a bed of state. *Parements* originally signified all sorts of
ornamental furniture or clothes, from *parer*, Fr. to adorn. See
ver. 2503, and *Leg. of G. W. Dido*, ver. 181 ;

To dauncing *chambres*, ful of *parementes*,
Of riche beddes and of *pavementes*,
This Eneas is ledde after the mete.

The Italians have the same expression ; *U. d. Conc. Trident.*
l. iii. ; " Il Pontefice—ritornato alla camera de' *paramenti* co'
" Cardinali."—

Ÿ. 10587. in the *Fish*] See the note on ver. 6284.

The ushers and the squierie ben gon,
 The spices and the win is come anon :
 They ete and drinke, and whan this had an end
 Unto the temple, as reson was, they wend : 10610
 The service don they soupen all by day.

What nedeth you reherfen hir array ?
 Eche man wot wel that at a kinges fest
 Is plentee to the most and to the lest,
 And deintees mo than ben in my knowing. 10615

At after souper goth this noble king
 To seen this hors of bras, with all a route
 Of lordes and of ladies him aboute.
 Swiche wondring was ther on this hors of bras,
 That fin the gret assége of Troye was 10620
 Ther as men wondred on an hors also,
 Ne was ther swiche a wondring as was tho.
 But, finally, the king asketh the knight
 The vertue of this courser and the might,
 And praied him to tell his governaunce. 10625

This hors anon gan for to trip and daunce,
 Whan that the knight laid hond up on his rein,
 And saide, Sire, ther n'is no more to fain,
 But whan you list to riden any where
 Ye moten trill a pin stant in his ere, 10630
 Which I shal tellen you betwixt us two,
 Ye moten nempne him to what place also,
 Or to what contree, that you list to ride.

And whan ye come ther as you list abide

Bid him descend, and trill another pin, 10635

(For therin lieth the effect of all the gin)

And he wol doun descend and don your will,

And in that place he wol abiden still;

Though al the world had the contrary swore

He shal not thennes be drawe ne be bore : 10640

Or if you list to bid him thennes gon

Trille this pin, and he wol vanish anon

Out of the sight of every maner wight,

And come agen, be it by day or night,

Whan that you list to clepen him again 10645

In swiche a guise as I shal to you fain

Betwixen you and me, and that ful sone.

Ride whan you list, ther n'is no more to done.

Enfourmed whan the king was of the knight,

And hath conceived in his wit aright 10650

The maner and the forme of all this thing,

Ful glad and blith this noble doughty king

Repaireth to his revel as beforne.

The bridel is in to the tour yborne,

And kept among his jewels lese and dere : 10655

The hors vanisht, I n'ot in what manere,

Out of hir sight; ye get no more of me :

But thus I lete in lust and jolitee

This Cambuscan his lordes festeyng

Til that wel nigh the day began to spring. 10660

¶ 10660. *Til that wel nigh*] *That* has been added for the sake
of the metre. We might read, with some mss.;

Til wel nigh the day began for to spring.

Pars secunda.

The norice of degeſtion, the ſlepe,
 Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe
 That mochel drinke and labour wol have reſt,
 And with a galping mouth hem all he keſt,
 And ſaid, that it was time to lie adoun, 10665
 For blood was in his domination:
 Cherifheth blood, natures frend, quod he.

They thanken him galping, by two, by three;
 And every wight gan drawe him to his reſt,
 As ſlepe hem bade; they toke it for the beſt. 10670

Hir dremes ſhul not now be told for me;
 Ful were hir hedes of fumofitee,
 That cauſeth dreame, of which ther is no charge:
 They ſlepen til that it was prime large,
 The moſte part, but it were Canace; 10675
 She was ful meſurable, as women be;
 For of hire father had ſhe take hire leve
 To gon to reſt ſone after it was eve;
 Hire liſte not appalled for to be,
 Nor on the morwe unfeſtliche for to ſee, 10680
 And ſlept hire firſte ſlepe, and than awoke:
 For ſwicke a joy ſhe in hire herte toke
 Both of hire queinte ring and of hire mirrour,
 That twenty time ſhe chaunged hire colour.

v. 10663. *That mochel drinke and labour*] So mss. C. 1, H.A. In ms. A. it is, *That mirthe and labour*; in Ask. 1, 2, *That after moche labour*; in ſeveral other mss. and editt. Ca. 1, 2, *That moche mete and labour*. We muſt ſearch further, I apprehend, for the true reading.

And in hire slepe right for the impressioun 10685
Of hire mirrour she had a visioun;

Wherfore or that the sonne gan up glide
She clepeth upon hire maistresse hire beside,
And saide that hire luste for to arise.

Thise olde women that ben gladly wise, 10690
As is hire maistresse, answerd hire anon,
And saide, Madam, whider wol ye gon
Thus erly? for the folk ben all in rest.

I wol, quod she, arisen (for me lest
No longer for to slepe) and walken aboute. 10695

Hire maistresse clepeth women a gret route,
And up they risen wel a ten or twelve;
Up riseth freshe Canace hireselfe,
As rody and bright as the yonge sonne
That in the Ram is foure degrees yronne; 10700

No higher was he whan she redy was;
And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed after the lusty seson fote
Lightly for to playe, and walken on fote,
Nought but with five or sixe of hire meinic, 10705
And in a trenche forth in the park goth she.

The vapour which that fro the erthe glode
Maketh the sonne to seme rody and brode;
But natheles it was so faire a sight

That it made all hir hertes for to light, 10710
What for the seson and the morwening,
And for the foules that she herde sing,

n kepe
ve rest,
kest,
10665
he.
by three;
s rest,
e best. 10670
me;
o charge:
10675
e
e, 10680
oke:
irroure,
blour.
So mss. C. 1, H. 1.
k. 1, 2, That of-
tt. Ca. 1, 2, That
er, I apprehend,

For right anon she wiste what they ment
Right by hir song, and knew al hir entent.

The knotte why that every tale is tolde, 10715
If it be taried til the lust be colde
Of hem that han it herkened after yore,
The favour passeth ever lenger the more
For fulsumnesse of the prolixitee;
And by that same reson thinketh me 10720
I shuld unto the knotte condescende,
And maken of hire walking sone an ende.

Amidde a tree for-dry, as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in hire walk,
Ther sat a faucon over hire hed ful hie 10725
That with a pitous vois so gan to crie,
That all the wood resounded of hire cry,
And beten had hireself so pitously
With both hire winges til the rede blood
Ran endelong the tree ther as she stood; 10730
And ever in on alway she cried and shrigh, t
And with hire bek hireselven she so twight,
That ther n'is tigre ne no cruel best
That dwelleth other in wood or in forest
That n'olde han wept, if that he wepen coude, 10735
For sorwe of hire, she shrigh alway so loude.

For ther was never yet no man on live,
If that he coude a faucon wel descrive,
That herde of swiche another of fayrenesse
As wel of plumage as of gentilesse 10740

Of shape, of all that might yrekened be :

A faucon peregrine semed she

Of fremde lond, and ever as she stood

She swouned now and now for lack of blood,

Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.

10745

This faire kinges doughter Canace,

That on hire finger bare the queinte ring,

Thurgh which she understood wel every thing

That any foule may in his leden fain,

And coude answere him in his leden again,

10750

Hath understonden what this faucon seyde,

And wel neigh for the routhe almost she deyde;

And to the tree she goth ful hastily,

And on this faucon loketh pitously,

And held hire lap abroad, for wel she wist

10755

The faucon muste fallen from the twist

Whan that she swouned next, for faute of blood.

A longe while to waiten hire she stood,

Til at the last she spake in this manere

Unto the hawk, as ye shul after here :

10760

v. 10742. *A faucon peregrine*] This species of falcon is thus described in the *Tresor de Brunet Latin*, P. 1, Ch. *Des faucons*, ms. Reg. 19 C. X. ; " La seconde lignie est *faucons*, que hom apele *pelerins*, par ce que nus ne trove son ni. ains est pris autresi come en *pelerinage*. et est mult legiers a norrir, et mult cortois, et vaillans, et de bone maniere." Chaucer adds, that this falcon was of *fremde* or *fremed lond*, from a foreign country.

v. 10749. *leden*] *Language*, Sax. a corruption of Latin. Dante uses *Latino* in the same sense, *Canz.* 1 ;

E cantine gli augelli

Ciascuno in suo *Latino*.

10740

What is the cause, if it be for to tell,
That ye ben in this furial peine of hell?
Quod Canace unto this hauk above;
Is this for sorwe of deth or losse of love?
For as I trow thise be the causes two 10765
That causen most a gentil herte wo.
Of other harme it nedeth not to speke,
For ye yourself upon yourself awreke,
Which preveth wel that other ire or drede
Mote ben encheson of your cruel dede, 10770
Sin that I se non other wight you chace.
For the love of God as doth yourselven grace;
Or what may be your helpe? for west ne est
Ne saw I never er now no brid ne best
That ferde with himself so pitoufly. 10775
Ye fle me with your sorwe veraily,
I have of you so gret compassioun.
For Goddes love come fro the tree adoun,
And as I am a kinges doughter trewe,
If that I veraily the causes knewe 10780
Of your disese, if it lay in my might
I wold amend it or that it were night,
As wisly help me the gret God of kind;
And herbes shal I right ynough yfind
To helen with your hurtes hastily. 10785
Tho shright this faucon yet more pitoufly
Than ever she did, and feil to ground anon,
And lith aswouned as ded as lith a ston,

Til Canace hath in hire lappe hire take
 Unto that time she gan of swoone awake, 10790
 And after that she out of swoone abraide
 Right in hire haukes leden thus she sayde :

10765 That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte
 (Feling his similitude in peines smerte)
 Is proved alle day, as men may see 10795

rede

10770 As wel by werke as by auctoritee,
 For gentil herte kitheth gentillesse.
 I see wel that ye have on my distresse
 Compassion, my faire Canace, 10800

e.
 grace;
 ne est

That Nature in your principles hath set.
 But for non hope for to fare the bet,

10775 But for to obey unto your herte free,
 And for to maken other yware by me,
 As by the whelpe chastised is the leon, 10805

un,

Right for that cause and that conclusion,
 While that I have a leifer and a space,
 Min harme I wol confessen er I pace.

10780 And ever while that on hire sorwe told
 That other wept as she to water wold, 10810

d;

Til that the faucon bad hire to be still,
 And with a sike right thus she said hire till :

10785 Ther I was bred (alas that ilke day!)
 And fostred in a roche of marble gray
 So tendrely, that nothing ailed me; 10815

itously
 anon,

I ne wist not what was aduersitee

Til I coud flee ful high under the skie.

Tho dwelled a tercelet me faste by
That semed welle of alle gentilleffe,
Al were he ful of trefon and falseneffe.

10820

It was so wrapped under humble chere,
And under hew of trouth in swiche manere,
Under plesance, and under besy peine,
That no wight coud have wend he coude feine,
So depe in greyn he died his coloures.

10825

Right as a serpent hideth him under floures,
Til he may see his time for to bite,

Right so this god of Loves hypocrite
Doth so his ceremonies and obeifance,

And kepeth in semblaunt alle his observance

10830

That souneth unto gentilleffe of love.

As on a tombe is all the faire above,
And under is the corps, swiche as ye wote,
Swiche was this hypocrite both cold and hote,

And in this wise he served his entent,

10835

That save the fend non wiste what he ment;

Til he so long had weped and complained,

And many a yere his service to me fained,

Till that min herte, to pitous and to nice,

Al innocent of his crowned malice,

10840

¶ 10840. *crowned malice*] The reader of taste will not be displeased, I trust, at my having received this reading upon the authority of ms. *A.* only: the common reading is *cruel*.

For-fered of his deth, as thoughte me,
 Upon his othes and his feuretee
 Graunted him love on this conditionn,
 That evermo min honour and renoun
 Were saved, both privee and apert;
 This is to say, that after his desert
 I yave him all min herte and all my thought,
 (God wote and he that other wayes nought)
 And toke his herte in chaunge of min for ay.
 But soth is said, gon sithen is many a day
 A trewe wight and a theef thinken not on.

And whan he saw the thing so ferygon,

That I had granted him fully my love,

In swiche a guise as I have said above,

And yeven him my trewe herte as free

As he swore that he yaf his herte to me,

Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse,

Fell on his knees with so gret humbleffe,

With so high reverence, as by his chere,

So like a gentil lover of manere,

So ravished, as it semed, for the joye,

That never Jafon ne Paris of Troye,

Jafon! certes ne never other man

Bin Lamech was, that alderfirst began

To loven two, as writen folk beforen,

Ne never sithen the first man was borne,

Ne coude man by twenty thouland part

Contrefete the sophimes of his art,

Volume III.

T

10820

10845

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ervance 10830

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10865

of taste will not be
 his reading upon the
 ading is cruel.

Ne were worthy to unbocle his galoche,
Ther doubleneffe of faining shuld approche, 10870
Ne coude so thanke a wight as he did me.

His maner was an heven for to see
To any woman, were she never so wise,
So painted he and kempt at point devise
As wel his wordes as his contenance: 10875

And I so loved him for his obeifance,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That if so were that any thing him smerte,
Al were it never so lite, and I it wist,
Me thought I felt deth at myn herte twist. 10880

And, shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
That my will was his willes instrument;
This is to say, my will obeied his will
In alle thing as fer as reson fill,
Keping the boundes of my worship ever; 10885
Ne never had I thing so lese ne lever
As him, God wot, ne never shal no mo.

This lasteth longer than a yere or two,
That I supposed of him nought but good:
But, finally, thus at the last it stood, 10890
That Fortune wolde that he muste twin
Out of that place which that I was in.
Wher me was wo it is no question;
I cannot make of it description:
For o thing dare I tellen boldely, 10895
I know what is the peine of deth therby,

Swiche harme I felt, for he ne might byleve.

So on a day of me he toke his leve,
So sorweful eke, that I wend veraily
That he had felt as mochel harme as I, 10900
Whan that I herd him speke and saw his hewe:

But natheles I thought he was so trewe,
And eke that he repairen shuld again
Within a litel while, soth for to fain,
And reson wold eke that he musle go 10905
For his honour, as often happeth so,
That I made vertue of necessitee,

And toke it wel sin that it muste be.
As I best might I hid fro him my forwe,
And toke him by the hond, Seint John to borwe,
And said him thus, Lo, I am youres all, 10911
Beth swiche as I have ben to you and shall.

What he answerd it nedeth not reherse;
Who can say bet than he, who can do werse?
Whan he hath al wel said than hath he done; 10915
Therefore behoveth him a ful long sponne
That shal ete with a fend; thus herd I say.

So at the last he muste forth his way;
And forth he fleeth, til he come ther him lest.
Whan it came him to purpos for to rest, 10920
I trow that he had thilke text in mind,
That alle thing repairing to his kind

*. 10921. *thilke text*] Boethius, l. iii. met. 2 ;

Repetunt proprios quæque recursum,
Redituque suo singula gaudent—

Gladeth himself; thus fain men as I gesse:
 Men loven of propre kind newefangelnesse,
 As briddes don that men in cages fede: 10923
 For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
 And strew hir cage faire and soft as silke,
 And give hem sugre, hony, bred, and milke,
 Yet right anon as that his dore is up
 He with his feet wol spurnen down his cup, 10933
 And to the wood he wol and wormes ete,
 So newefangel ben they of hir mete,
 And loven noveltees of propre kind;
 No gentilleffe of blood ne may hem bind.

So ferd this tercelet, alas the day! 10935
 Though he were gentil borne, and fresh, and gay,
 And goodly for to seen, and humble, and free.
 He saw upon a time a kite flee,
 And sodenly he loved this kite so
 That all his love is clene from me ago, 10945
 And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise.
 Thus hath the kite my love in hire service,
 And I am lorn withouten remedy.

And with that word this faucon gan to cry,
 And swouneth eft in Canacees barme. 10948
 Gret was the sorwe for that haukes harme

which our Author has thus translated; "All thynges felen
 "ayen to hir propre course, and all thynges rejoyfen on
 "retourninge agayne to hir nature." The comparifon of the
 bird is taken from the same place.

That Canace and all hire women made;
 They n'listen how they might the faucon glade:
 But Canace home bereth hire in hire lap,
 And softly in plastres gan hire wrap 10950
 Ther as she with hire bek had hurt hireselfe.

Now cannot Canace but herbes delve
 Out of the ground, and maken salves newe
 Of herbes precious and fine of hewe
 To helen with this hauk: fro day to night 10955
 She doth hire besinesse and all hire might.
 And by hire beddes hed she made a mew,
 And covered it with velouettes blew,
 In signe of trouth that is in woman sene,
 And all without the mew is peinted grene, 10960
 In which were peinted all thise false foules,
 As ben thise tidifes, tercelettes, and owles,
 And pics, on hem for to cry and chide,
 Right for despit were peinted hem beside.

¶. 10958. *velouettes blew*] Velvets, from the Fr. *velou*, *velouette*. See *Du Cange*, in v. *Villosa*, *Velluetum*.—I will just add, that as *blew* was the colour of truth, [See *C. L.* 248,] so *green* belonged to inconstancy: hence in a *ballade upon an inconstant lady* [among Stowe's additions to Chaucer's Works, p. 551, ed. *Urr.*] the burthen is—

Insteed of *blew* thus may ye were al *grene*.

¶. 10962. *thise tidifes*] The *tidife* is mentioned as an inconstant bird in *The Leg. of G. W.* ver. 154;

As doth the *tidif* for newefangelnesse.

Skinner supposes it to be the titmouse; but he produces no authority for his supposition, nor have I any to oppose to it.

¶. 10963, 4.] Are transposed from the order in which they stand in all the editt. and mss. that I have seen. Some of the best

Thus lete I Canace hire hauk keping: 10965
 I wol no more as now speke of hire ring,
 Til it come eft to purpos for to sain,
 How that this faucon gat hire love again
 Repentant, as the story telleth us,
 By mediation of Camballus, 10970
 The kinges sone, of which that I you told;
 But hennesforth I wol my processe hold
 To speke of adventures and of batailles,
 That yet was never herd so gret mervailles.

First wol I tellen you of a Cambuscan, 10975
 That in his time many a citee wan;
 And after wol I speke of Algarfis,
 How that he wan Theodora to his wif,
 For whom ful oft in gret peril he was,
 Ne had he ben holpen by the hors of bras; 10980
 And after wol I speke of Camballo,
 That fought in listes with the brethren two

msf. however read—*Andpies*—which rather countenances the transposition. My only excuse for such a liberty must be, that I cannot make any good sense of them in the common order.

ψ. 10977, 8.] Are also transposed, but upon the authority of msf. *A. C.* 1, and I believe some others, though being satisfied of the certainty of the emendation I have omitted to take a note of their concurrence. Ed. *Ca.* 2, agrees with those msf. According to the common arrangement old Cambuscan is to win Theodora to his wife, and we are not told what is to be the object of Algarfis's adventures.

ψ. 10981. of *Camballo*] Msf. *A.* reads *Cabalo*: but that is not my only reason for suspecting a mistake in this name. It secum

For Canace, er that he might hire winne,
And ther I left I wol again beginne.

10984

* * * * *

clear from the context that the person here intended is (not a brother but) a lover of Canace;

Who fought in listes with the brethren two
For Canace, or that he might hire winne.

The brethren two are obviously the two brethren of Canace, who have been mentioned above, *Algariss* and *Camballo*. In *msl. Ask.* 1, 2, it is—*hir brethren two*, which would put the matter out of all doubt. *Camballo* could not fight with himself.—Again, if this *Camballo* be supposed to be the brother of Canace, and to fight in defence of her with some two brethren who might be suitors to her, (according to Spenser's fiction) he could not properly be said to *winne* his sister, when he only prevented others from winning her.—The outline therefore of the unfinished part of this Tale, according to my idea, is nearly this; the conclusion of the story of the faucon,

By mediation of *Camballus*,

with the help of the ring, the conquests of *Cambuscan*, the winning of *Theodora* by *Algariss*, with the assistance of the horse of brass, and the marriage of Canace to some knight, who was first obliged to fight for her with her two brethren, a method of courtship very consonant to the spirit of ancient chivalry.

¶. 10984. *And ther I left*] After this verse, in *msl. C.* 1, and others, is the following note; "Here endeth The Squieres Tale as meche as Chaucer made." The two lines which in the *editt.* and some *msl.* are made to begin a third part are wanting in all the best *msl.*;

Apollo whirleth up his chare so hie
Til that the god Mercurius housse the fle.

They certainly have not the least appearance of belonging to this place. I should guess that they were originally scribbled by some vacant reader in the blank space which is commonly left at the end of this Tale, and afterwards transcribed as Chaucer's by some copist of more diligence than sagacity.

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Wif of Bathes Prologue,	5
The Wif of Bathes Tale,	40
The Freres Prologue,	58
The Freres Tale,	59
The Sompnoures Prologue,	73
The Sompnoures Tale,	75
The Clerkes Prologue,	99
The Clerkes Tale,	102
The Marchantes Prologue,	146
The Marchantes Tale,	147
The Squieres Prologue,	194
The Squieres Tale,	196

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END OF VOLUME THIRD.



Page

5

40

58

59

73

75

99

102

146

147

194

196